

***Heavenly Powers:  
Holy See Diplomacy toward China***

*by*

*Fabrizio Bozzato, Grad Dip (International Politics), MPolSc*

*Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements  
for the Degree of Master of Arts*

*School of Government*

*University of Tasmania*

*February 2009*

**- Declaration -**

I declare that this thesis contains no material which has been accepted for a degree or diploma by the University of Tasmania or any other tertiary institution, except by way of background information and duly acknowledged in the thesis, and to the best of my knowledge and belief no material previously published or written by another person except where due acknowledgement is made in the text of the thesis, nor does the thesis contain any material that infringes copyright.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Fabrizio Bozzato', written in a cursive style.

Fabrizio Bozzato

February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2009

***- Statement of Authority of Access -***

This thesis may be made available for loan and limited copying in accordance with the Copyright Act 1968.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Fabrizio Bozzato', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Fabrizio Bozzato

February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2009

## ***- Abstract -***

Holy See-China relations have a long and chequered history marked by political as well as cultural conflicts. Since the foundation of the People's Republic of China (PRC), these relations have represented one of the thorniest and most complicated diplomatic questions on the world stage. After a long period of absence of communication, over the last three decades the Holy See and Beijing have held secret or discreet talks. These talks to date, however, have not led to the opening of formal negotiations. The current diplomatic stalemate is mainly due to the PRC's intransigence in demanding the Holy See cede the direction of the Catholic Church in China to China's own governmental organizations and sever diplomatic relations with Taiwan. While the Holy See is leaning toward compromise on the latter request, it can hardly bend to the former. In fact, the Catholic Church regards the exertion of Papal authority over the local Catholic hierarchy as a pillar of its doctrinal and institutional integrity and an essential prerequisite for establishing 'working conditions' to carry on ecclesial activities at the national level. Rome's defence of the Church's unity and independence from secular influence collides with Beijing's pursuit of institutional and ideological control over Catholics in China. This striving for control is rooted in the Chinese state apparatus' conviction that the Catholic Church, because of its organizational virtuosity, and the Holy See's international status and prestige, has a special potential to undermine the Communist Party's authority. Holy See-PRC diplomatic normalization is, therefore, predicated on the solution of the conflict of authority between the Apostolic See and Beijing.



In order to understand this conflict and identify possible solutions to it, this study investigates the Holy See's diplomatic policy toward China. This thesis initially explains the unique position that the Holy See occupies in the international system and delivers a diachronic analysis of the evolution of Sino-Pontifical relations by individuating and examining their historical phases. Subsequently, the thesis shifts its focus to contemporary developments and options in Holy See-PRC interaction by analyzing Benedict XVI's 2007 letter to Chinese Catholics. It then investigates the main obstacles to diplomatic progress, including factional dynamics within the Church. Finally, this study explores the potential solutions which - on the basis of political-diplomatic precedents and the tradition of the Catholic Church - the parties could adopt in order to establish formal relations.

## **- Acknowledgments -**

I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor, Associate Professor Richard Herr, whose expertise, understanding, and patience, added considerably to my graduate experience. He provided me with direction and moral support, and became more of a mentor and friend, than a professor. I would like to thank also my co-supervisor, Dr Terry Narramore, for the precious assistance he offered me at all levels of the research project. I particularly appreciate the fact that he generously shared his profound knowledge of China with me.

Apart from my supervisors, I owe special thanks to a number of ecclesiastics, diplomats and academics. Through their help, encouragement and advice, they gave an essential contribution to the making of this thesis.

*In primis*, I sincerely thank Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, Secretary of State of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI. Cardinal Bertone furnished me with precious letters of introduction and has followed with great interest the progress of my thesis. I express my gratitude also to Cardinal Joseph Zen Ze-kiun, Bishop of Hong Kong, who benevolently gave some of his time to explain to me the situation of the Church in China. I thank Monsignor Ambrose Madtha, former Chargé d’Affaires a.i. of the Apostolic Nunciature in China, who kindly helped me to identify the main problems in Sino-pontifical relations. I give my thanks to Monsignor Salvatore Pennacchio, Apostolic Nuncio to the Kingdom of Thailand, who provided me with useful research material. I acknowledge Reverend Dr Gianni Criveller, analyst at the Holy Spirit Study Centre of Hong Kong, who had the

patience to spend long hours with me, answering my multitude of questions. Thank you also to the Salesian Fathers in Hong Kong and Taipei, who have been my family while I stayed in *Terra Sinica*. A special mention goes to Monsignor Lech Piechota, Official of the Secretariat of State of the Holy See, who warmly encouraged me in my research.

An earnest acknowledgment must go to Dr Chou-seng Tou, Ambassador of the Republic of China to the Holy See, and his predecessor, Dr Raymond Tai. I really appreciate the time they took to explain to me the state of Pontifical-Taiwanese relations and answer my many questions when I was beginning my research.

Very special thanks go out to my ‘uncle’, *Commendator* Guido Gusso, whose knowledge of Pontifical institutions greatly added to my understanding of the Holy See. He gave me continuous support and advice. I am honoured I had the trust of a man who has devotedly served in the Vatican under four Popes.

I owe my gratitude also to *Commendator* Dr Peter Chiang, a scholar and a journalist at Vatican Radio. His advice was precious, and his friendship was certainly invaluable.

I would also like to thank my family for the support they provided me through my entire life and, in particular, the writing of this study. Indeed, without the love and constant encouragement of my parents and my sister, I would not have finished this thesis.

## ***- Table of Contents -***

<i>Table of Figures</i>	<i>xii</i>
<i>Acronyms and Abbreviations</i>	<i>xiii</i>
 <i>Epigraph</i>	 <i>1</i>
 <i>Introduction</i>	
<i>The Problem of Diplomatic Stalemate</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Research Questions and Analytical Perspective</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Methodology</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Researching Sino-Holy See Relations</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Thesis Outline</i>	<i>14</i>
 <i>Chapter I</i>	
<i>The Holy See as a Subject of International Law</i>	
<i>Introduction</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>The Apostolic See</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>The Holy See and the Vatican City State</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>Conclusion</i>	<i>33</i>

## *Chapter II*

### *The Historical Evolution of Holy See-China Relations: a Relationship Unfolding over the Centuries*

<i>Introduction</i>	35
<i>Over the Centuries: from the Middle Ages to the 1920s</i>	36
<i>1930s-1950s: Diplomatic Imbroglios, Achievements and Débâcles</i>	40
<i>1950s-1990s: from Confrontation to Signs of an Opening</i>	47
<i>Conclusion</i>	58

## *Chapter III*

### *The Late Pontificate of John Paul II and the Initiatives of Benedict XVI*

<i>Introduction</i>	60
<i>High Hopes and Contradictory Gestures</i>	61
<i>Benedict XVI: Perseverance in Dialogue and Coordination of Efforts</i>	70
<i>Conclusion</i>	80

## *Chapter IV*

### *Benedict XVI's Letter to Chinese Catholics: a Vision for Future Relations with China*

<i>Introduction</i>	84
<i>Benedict XVI's Letter</i>	85
<i>The Chinese Reactions to the Papal Letter</i>	95
<i>The Holy See's Cautious Comments on the Chinese Reactions</i>	101
<i>Conclusion</i>	107

## *Chapter V*

### *Factionalism on Sinopolitik: 'Party of Compromise' versus 'Party of Principles'*

<i>Introduction</i>	108
<i>The Difficult Coexistence of Idealism and Realism</i>	109
<i>'Party of Compromise' versus 'Party of Principles'</i>	115
<i>The Papal Initiatives to End the Factional Divide</i>	130
<i>Conclusion</i>	133

## *Chapter VI*

### *The Conflict of Authority between the Party-State and the Catholic Church: Confucian Obedience versus Libertas Ecclesiae*

<i>Introduction</i>	135
<i>China's Religious Policy: a Diachronic View</i>	136
<i>The Conflict of Authority between the Party-State and the Catholic Church</i>	150
<i>State Control Over Religion: an Hegelian and Marxist Concept</i>	155
<i>Conclusion</i>	165

## *Chapter VII*

### *Working towards Formal Recognition: Aims and Problems*

<i>Introduction</i>	167
<i>Aims in Normalizing Relations</i>	168
<i>Problems on the Road to Normalization of Relations: the 'Non Interference in China's Internal Affairs'</i>	177

<i>The Appointment of Bishops: Potential Solutions</i>	187
<i>Taiwan: an Ancillary (but not Unimportant) Issue</i>	193
<i>Conclusion</i>	200

## *Chapter VIII*

### *Working towards Formal Recognition: Models and Ways Forward*

<i>Introduction</i>	202
<i>The Soviet/Russian Model</i>	203
<i>The Vietnamese Model</i>	209
<i>Ways forward</i>	216
<i>Conclusion</i>	232

<i>Conclusions</i>	234
--------------------	-----

<i>References</i>	248-308
-------------------	---------

***- Table of Figures -***

<i>Estimated Statistics for the Catholic Church in China, 1996</i>	82
<i>Estimated Statistics for the Catholic Church in China, 2007</i>	83



## ***- Acronyms and Abbreviations -***

- CPC            Communist Party of China
- CPCA        Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association
- PIME        *Pontificio Istituto Missioni Estere*  
(Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions)
- PRC        People's Republic of China
- RAB        Religious Affairs Bureau
- SARA        State Administration of Religious Affairs
- VCS        Vatican City State
- WTO        World Trade Organization

**- Epigraph -**

*"In any case I long ago realised that it is almost impossible for a layman and a non-Catholic, and indeed for most Catholics and ecclesiastics outside the Vatican City, to form a valid judgement or express an authoritative opinion on Papal policy. The Pope's decision may, or must be influenced by so many imponderable or invisible elements. Moreover, not only is the atmosphere of the Vatican supernatural and universal...but it is also fourth-dimensional, and so to speak, outside of time .... They reckon in centuries and plan for eternity and this inevitably renders their policy inscrutable, confusing and, on occasion, reprehensible to practical and time-conditioned minds."*

Sir D'Arcy Osborne, March 1947

British Ambassador to the Holy See

*"China's patience lasts a thousand years, but the Church's patience is eternal."*

Cardinal Agostino Casaroli, 1980s

Secretary of State of His Holiness John Paul II

## **- Introduction -**

### *The Problem of Diplomatic Stalemate*

“The Roman Catholic Church is the only religious confession which has access to full diplomatic relations.”<sup>1</sup> This is due, in the first instance, to its centralized and transnational hierocratic organization;<sup>2</sup> the fact that its supreme government, the Holy See, enjoys an international personality; and its role in international affairs over the centuries of its venerable history. The Holy See, based in the Vatican City State (VCS), entertains diplomatic relations with 177 sovereign states and maintains permanent representatives in thirty-three international organizations. At present, only a handful of countries do not bestow formal recognition upon the Holy See. These countries, apart from a minnow like Tuvalu, are all ruled by more or less introvert governments which, for strong ideological or religious reasons, refrain from establishing diplomatic ties with the supreme government of the Catholic Church. This holds true for all but one. Among these states there is one country that stands apart from the rest for its size, population, economy, geopolitical importance and outward foreign policy orientation. This country is the People’s Republic of China (PRC), a state that is to bestride the XXI century scene unquestionably as a leading world power.

---

<sup>1</sup> Jean-Louis Tauran, *Is the Holy See a Political Power?*, magisterial lecture, Provident University, Taichung (Taiwan) 23 November 2005, p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> In Max Weber’s words, a hierocratic organization is “an organization, which enforces its order through psychic coercion by sanctioning religious benefits. A compulsory hierocratic organization will be called a ‘church’ insofar as its administrative staff claims a monopoly of the legitimate use of hierocratic coercion.” (Max Weber, *Economy and Society. An Outline of Interpretative Sociology*, edited by Guenther Roth and Claus Mittich, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1978, p. 212).

In the last two decades, Beijing has pursued a policy of growing engagement with the outer world, trying to gain credit as a responsible stakeholder in the international community. As a result, today China's omni-directional foreign policy, driven by Beijing's geopolitical and energy interests, reaches to the most remote archipelagos of the South Pacific and the far corners of Africa.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, the Holy See, which governs and represents an organization that is global by vocation, in the last decades has constantly increased the number of its diplomatic missions, even in countries where Catholics are just a small group. Yet, since the expulsion of the Pontifical representative from the PRC in 1951, the Holy See and Beijing have been unable to achieve diplomatic rapprochement. The diplomatic stalemate has continued even after the end of the Cold War era. On the one hand, the two parties have inaugurated a dialogue carried out mainly through secret contacts, low-profile or little-publicized meetings and, occasionally, highly symbolic initiatives. This dialogue has seen the Holy See generally in a proactive role while Beijing has usually been reactive. On the other hand, although the interlocutors have made significant progresses towards diplomatic normalization, the dialogue process has not led to the opening of formal negotiations.

### *Research Questions and Analytical Perspective*

Why have the Holy See and the PRC been unable to establish diplomatic relations? How can the Holy See, which claims universal spiritual authority and upholds the Church's independence from secular influence, achieve diplomatic normalization with the Government of the PRC, which asserts its absolute sovereignty and seeks

---

<sup>3</sup> Bates Gill, Chin-hao Huang and J. Stephen Morrison, "Assessing China's Growing Influence in Africa", *China Security*, Vol. 3, No. 3, Summer 2007, pp. 3-21.

institutional and ideological control over the religious sectors of Chinese society? These questions have been at the centre of the current academic and public debate on relations between the Roman Catholic Church and the PRC. In pursuit of an answer to this 'central' queries, it is necessary to investigate the causes of the existing difficulties, misunderstandings and disputes between the Catholic Church and the PRC, and subsequently explore the possibilities for the future establishment of diplomatic relations between the Holy See and Beijing. Such a task requires the adoption of a wide ranging and bifocal perspective, the two foci of which are the Catholic Church and China. On the one hand, the analysis must investigate Roman Catholicism as an international system of belief, action and political influence, and identify the characters and aims of the Holy See's diplomacy and international projection. On the other hand, the analysis must examine the history and politics of China's approach to sovereignty, religious belief, and ideology, especially in the light of Beijing's emerging role in the international system. This thesis adopts such a bifocal perspective, which was made particularly necessary by the tendential incompatibility between China's peculiar application of the principle of sovereignty to religion-state relations and the Catholic Church's universalism and international moral influence.

The 1648 Peace of Westphalia established the principle of state sovereignty as the cornerstone of the edifice of modern international relations. This State sovereignty is built upon territoriality, the supreme power of a sovereign over a certain territory, and non-interference, whereby sovereigns have the right to govern free of outside interference. External claims to interfere were rejected, whether based on political,

legal or religious grounds.<sup>4</sup> Today, in the words of former United Nations Organization Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, “the time of absolute sovereignty has passed; its theory was never matched by reality.”<sup>5</sup> Nonetheless, the PRC is still an ardent supporter of the traditional Westphalian model and understands sovereignty as the uncompromising “exclusion of external actors from domestic authority structures.”<sup>6</sup>

The Westphalian idea of sovereignty also included the principle *cuius regio, eius religio*,<sup>7</sup> meaning that the sovereign’s faith became the official confession of his state. However, this principle was tempered by the principle of religious tolerance, according to which the rulers were bound to respect the freedom of worship and conscience of religious minorities.<sup>8</sup> By contrast, in Imperial China the state regarded the exertion of direct and ultimate control over all religious groups as constitutive of its domestic sovereignty. This prerogative implied the state’s right to outlaw and persecute religious formations that refused to bend to its authority or that were ‘politically dangerous’. The idea that sovereignty included unrestricted control over religion was inherited by the Maoist government which, in exaggerating Marx’s critique of religion as the ‘opiate of the masses’, combined it with a fundamental ideological opposition to religious belief. Consequently, the authorities targeted religious groups for persecution in the incitement of revolutionary fervour. With time, the Communist *regimen* gradually shifted to a system based on strict state-sanctioned control of religions through government-

---

<sup>4</sup> Stephane Beaulac, “The Westphalian Model in Defining International Law: Challenging the Myth”, *Australian Journal of Legal History*, Vol. 8, No. 2, 2004, pp. 181-213.

<sup>5</sup> Boutros Boutros-Ghali as quoted in Bill Carman, “State Sovereignty”, *International Development Research Centre*, 17 November 2004, [http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-28492-201-1-DO\\_TOPIC.html](http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-28492-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html). Accessed 20 March 2008.

<sup>6</sup> Josef Joffe, “Rethinking the Nation-State: The Many Meanings of Sovereignty”, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 78, No. 6, November/December 1999, p. 124.

<sup>7</sup> In English, ‘whose rule, his religion’.

<sup>8</sup> Josef Joffe, “Rethinking the Nation-State: The Many Meanings of Sovereignty”, p. 123.

directed bodies called 'patriotic associations'. In this system, governmental approval and control are aimed at rendering religious formations para-state organizations and asserting state sovereignty over the religious sphere. Thus, individuals or groups upholding the notion that religious belief transcends nationalism or politics and that religion should not be subject to political veto are often subjected to persecution.<sup>9</sup>

Roman Catholics are among these groups. Catholicism, in fact, is a religion that preaches a "transnational fellowship of belief"<sup>10</sup> and "does not consider territoriality as a theological barrier to the universal practice and desirability of the faith."<sup>11</sup> Therefore, it intends to proselytize across borders and act on a global scale in order to improve worldly conditions according to its vision. Being a programmatically transnational non-state actor, the Catholic Church challenges the Chinese idea of Westphalian sovereignty, a conception which depicts states as hard-shelled territorial entities with an absolute right to non-interference.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, the Church maintains that "the political community and the Church are autonomous and independent of each other in their own fields,"<sup>13</sup> thus questioning state suzerainty over religion. Due to its absolutist concept of sovereignty, Beijing perceives the Church's defence of its institutional and doctrinal identity as a defiance of Chinese sovereignty. For this reason, the PRC,

---

<sup>9</sup> Alan Bock, "Considering Sovereignty", *Antiwar.com*, 11 April 2001, <http://www.antiwar.com/bock/pf/p-b041101.html>. Accessed 19 January 2008.

<sup>10</sup> "Fellowship is definable as an association through shared ideals" (Alan Chong, "The Foreign Policy Potential Of 'Small State Soft Power' Information Strategies", conference paper, Sixth Pan-European Conference on International Relations, Turin, 12-15 September 2007, p. 16

<sup>11</sup> Alan Chong, "The Foreign Policy Potential Of 'Small State Soft Power' Information Strategies", pp. 16-17.

<sup>12</sup> Josef Joffe, "Rethinking the Nation-State: The Many Meanings of Sovereignty", p. 125.

<sup>13</sup> Benedict XVI, *Letter of the Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI to the Bishops, Priests, Consecrated Persons and Lay Faithful of the Catholic Church in the People's Republic of China*, 27 May 2007, [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/letters/2007/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_let\\_20070527\\_china\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/letters/2007/documents/hf_ben-xvi_let_20070527_china_en.html). Accessed 2 July 2007.

unlike other socialist states, regards the Holy See's prerogative to appoint bishops and excommunicate violators as a threat to its national sovereignty. Consequently, the Communist government bestowed on the Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association (CPCA) the right to select state-approved bishops and formalize their ordination. The authorities consider the faithful and the clergy adhering to the CPCA as being 'loyal to China', while forcing underground those congregations and clerics who remain loyal to the Holy See.

Given that Catholics are barely one per cent of China's population, their supposed divided loyalty represents a very modest menace to the PRC's sovereignty. Actually, in the eyes of the Chinese authorities, Catholics do not pose a threat on the strength of their numbers but because of their connection with the Holy See. The supreme government of the Church, in fact, has an influence in the international arena that does not have any correlation with the physical territory on which it exercises temporal jurisdiction, and defies sovereignty-bound ways of comprehending power. Scholars refer to this kind of influence as 'soft power'.<sup>14</sup>

Contrary to hard power - the utilization of military and/or economic means - soft power consists of getting others to want what one wants through attraction or persuasion instead of coercion.<sup>15</sup> The Holy See's soft power originates from two main sources. The first source is "the size and breadth of the Church's worldwide membership".<sup>16</sup> As a result of its large and diffuse body of faithful followers, the

---

<sup>14</sup> Joseph Nye, "Podium: Joseph Nye: To win the war on terror, you need the carrot", *Independent*, 13 June 2005, [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_qn4158/is\\_20050613/ai\\_n14664193](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qn4158/is_20050613/ai_n14664193). Accessed 1 September 2007.

<sup>15</sup> Joseph Nye, "Europe's Soft Power", *Globalist*, 3 May 2004, <http://www.theglobalist.com/StoryId.aspx?StoryId=3886>. Accessed 17 September 2007.

<sup>16</sup> Paul Christopher Manuel, *The Catholic Church and the Nation-State: Comparative Perspectives*, Washington D.C., Georgetown University Press, 2006, p. 10.



Church receives great attention, and often careful treatment, from other international actors. The second source is the Church's moral charisma in the international arena. The Holy See is a moral power which implements a moral diplomacy - "that of composing differences," promoting peace, "and setting out appropriate normative standards of conduct in both domestic and international affairs."<sup>17</sup> The Holy See, whose foreign policy capability is enhanced by its exceptionally well-trained diplomatic service, uses its soft power to support the defence of the Catholic faith in tandem with the cause of human rights.

China, which is widely criticized for its jurisdictionalist<sup>18</sup> religious policy and poor human rights record, is deeply suspicious that the Holy See could use its soft power to interfere in Chinese internal affairs in order to subvert the country's political system. In Beijing's view, the Holy See would use Chinese Catholics as a fifth column in order to undermine the government's legitimacy as the final source of authority. The Communist leadership's fear is that a very well organized and overseas-directed religious group could act as a catalyst for an alliance between religious formations and the large discontented segments of Chinese society, creating a mighty and unstoppable force. For this reason, China's rulers look at the Holy See as an unfriendly government and resort to any means to bring all Catholics under the control of CPCA. It is, then, evident that the Chinese stance on state-religion relations and the Holy See's character as a non-state 'moral power' have crucial implications for Sino-Pontifical relations and justify the adoption of the aforementioned bifocal perspective. This approach does not concentrate just on

---

<sup>17</sup> Alan Chong, "The Foreign Policy Potential Of 'Small State Soft Power' Information Strategies", p. 17.

<sup>18</sup> Jurisdictionalism is a political theory aiming at regulating the relations between State and Catholic Church by subjecting the latter and its organizations to the State. (Giuseppe Alberigo, "The Local Church in the West", *Heythrop Journal*, Vol. 28, No. 2, April 1987, p. 134).

the bilateral relationship between the two sides but also takes into consideration each party's specificities and *weltanschauung*.<sup>19</sup>

In addition to being bifocal, the analytical perspective should also be diachronic in order to individuate and examine the historical phases of Holy See-China relations and identify the dynamics, factors and actors of change or inertia. The diachronic approach, in fact, allows the researcher to weigh the influence of different actors and to cast light on the evolution of the factors shaping a stochastic process as reflected in the nature of diplomatic relations. On such a basis, this thesis delivers a diachronic analysis of the Holy See's diplomacy toward China, particularly focusing on the period from the 1990s to the present. Indeed, the scrutiny of the history of Holy See-China relations, enables this study to better investigate the rationale and aims of Pontifical diplomatic initiatives and penetrate the ideology and politics of China's approach to religious belief and organized religion.

### *Methodology*

This study employed an historical-empirical methodology. Given that Holy-See relations are a scarcely and, often, only superficially explored field, opting for a mainly empirical methodology was almost an inescapable choice in the analysis of sources. This was true especially for on-line research. Never in history has such a huge quantity of data and documents been made available to the researcher as in the Internet era. Never in history has so much information been scattered over a multitude of labyrinthine databases. However, the process of consultation and

---

<sup>19</sup> The German term *weltanschauung* means a comprehensive conception or apprehension of the world especially from a specific standpoint.

selection of sources enabled me to develop a better understanding of the subject. The attainment of this comprehension of the matter, in truth, would have been far more arduous and incomplete without the advice of the illustrious figures I visited in *Terra Sinica* and Europe. This enhanced competence allowed me to adopt a soundly historical-empirical methodology in the analysis. I deemed such a methodological approach as the most apt for investigating a subject like Holy See-China interaction, because it permitted me to combine the rigour of historical method with the ductility of empirical research. The analysis, especially in the last two chapters of this study, has benefited also from the application of the case study method. Rather than treating the relations between the Holy See and China as a monadic case, I chose to examine some of their aspects in the light of other cases of Church-state diplomatic interaction. When necessary, the analysis employed even an heuristic approach, due to the ability of the latter to develop explanations for events and find enlightening connections between them. Although the analytical focus has sometimes been concentrated on events of particular significance, this study avoided following the logic of the *histoire événementielle* (in English, ‘episodic history’).<sup>20</sup> The attention that this study devoted to ‘small details’ and ‘particular moments’ was never to the detriment of the long *durée* vision and the identification and the investigation of long-term changes and trends in Sino-Pontifical interaction. Indeed, it would have been reductionist, myopic and sterile to consider Holy See-China relations as little more than a mere succession of events. This study, on the contrary, took an holistic approach to Sino-Pontifical relations and subscribed to the view that Marc Bloch expressed in his *Apology of History*. As

---

<sup>20</sup> This expression, coined by French historians Paul Lacombe and Francois Simiand, indicates “the predominant practice of historians to concentrate their energy on recording short-term happenings or events.” (Immanuel Wallerstein, “Time and Duration: The Unexcluded Middle”, *Thesis Eleven*, No. 54, August 1998, <http://www.binghamton.edu/fbc/iwtimdu.htm>. Accessed 10 April 2008).

the French historian maintained, even behind the institutions which appear to be the most impersonal, there are men who make them live.

### *Researching Sino-Holy See Relations*

While there is a relatively vast array of journalistic articles and short essays examining particular aspects or regular problems of Sino-Pontifical interaction, there is, by contrast, a dismal paucity of comprehensive studies on the difficult, complex and fascinating relations between the Holy See and the Middle Kingdom. The only lengthy and exhaustive monographic publication on this subject is a volume by Professor Beatrice Leung, who is a Catholic nun and a renowned expert on state-religion relations and the Catholic Church in China. Leung's book, which was published in 1992, is entitled *Sino-Vatican Relations: Problems in conflicting authority 1976-1986*. Although the theme and the scope of this study make its topicality unquestionable, and albeit the author has, over the years, supplemented her work with numerous essays, the utility of Leung's volume has diminished with the passing of time. The passage of years is also gradually consigning to obsolescence "Sino-Vatican Diplomatic Relations: Problems and Prospects", a pivotal essay by Gerald Chan published in *China Quarterly* in 1989. Other more recent works have a non-scholarly character and lack academic neutrality. This is the case with Reverend Bernardo Cervellera's *Missione Cina* ("Mission China") and Cardinal Roger Etchegaray's *Verso i cristiani in Cina. Visti da una rana dal fondo di un pozzo* ("Christians in China. Seen by a Frog at the Bottom of a Well"). Other monographs, like James T. Myers' 1991 *Enemies Without Guns: The Catholic Church in China*, and Elisa Giunipero's *Chiesa Cattolica e Cina*

*Comunista: Dalla rivoluzione del 1949 al Concilio Vaticano II* ("The Catholic Church and Communist China: From the Revolution of 1949 to the Second Vatican Council"), have a specifically historiographic purpose, and often cover only circumscribed periods of the history of Holy See-China relations.

Therefore, due to the scarcity and the limited usefulness of the monographic studies on the topic, it was necessary to be eclectic in dealing with the sources, winnowing through a heterogeneous assortment of articles and essays. It also became clear that selecting from a vast array of sources of varying quality and authority, many of which were contradictory and inaccurate, required not only considerable time but also a deeper background. Being mindful of Confucius' admonition: "if you want to do a good job, you must first sharpen your tools," I realized that not only had I to study the history of Catholicism in China, but also to individuate and examine the guidelines of the Holy See's *Sinopolitik*. Similarly, not only had I to develop an understanding of the principles, evolution and trends of China's religious policy, but also to seek the advice and guidance of scholars deeply immersed in the study of Sino-Pontifical relations and of clergymen and diplomats involved in the Holy See-PRC chess game. For this reason, I visited Rome, Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan. During this *grand tour*, I had the privilege of meeting, among other ecclesiastic and diplomatic figures, Cardinal Joseph Zen Ze-kun, Archbishop of Hong Kong, Monsignor Ambrose Madtha, the then Holy See's Chargé d'Affaires ad interim in Taiwan, and the Taiwanese ambassador to the Holy See, Dr Chou-seng Tou. Among the scholars, I particularly benefited from the directions of Reverend Gianni Criveller, an analyst at the Hong Kong Holy Spirit Centre, and Dr Peter Chiang, an expert based at the Vatican Radio.

The advice I received from all the personalities and distinguished scholars I met was essential for my navigation in the *mare magnum* of the public record on Sino-Holy See relations. This sea of potential sources was made tempestuous by the tangle of religious problems and political issues involved, and the polestars of objectivity and impartiality were often clouded by the distortions of facts and emotional biases resulting from the contrasting stances of each side. In this regard, the research skills and background in Asian studies I acquired thanks to my previous studies at the State University of Milan and at the University of Tasmania proved to be precious resources in steering a course through the 167 articles, ninety-eight essays, fifty-two books, fourteen reports, and fifty various documents I used as reference material in this study. A large number of these publications treat only particular aspects of Sino-Pontifical relations. Many other works, instead, are about topics and concepts I needed to become familiar with and understand in order to investigate the interaction between the See of Peter and Beijing. For instance, the monographs by Eric O. Hanson and Giulio Boldrin, as well as the magisterial lectures of Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, were extremely helpful in developing my understanding of the Holy See as an actor in world politics. The essays by Beatrice Leung, Pitman B. Potter, and Kim-Kwong Chang furnished me with a precious wealth of information on recent religion-state dynamics in China. Equally, perusing numerous documents issued by the Holy See was essential for my comprehension of the Roman Catholic Church's *Magisterium* and doctrinal system. Sandro Magister's articles, which represented an essential up-to-date source of reliable information and insightful reflection about the ongoing developments in Sino-Pontifical relations, deserve special mention.

## *Thesis Outline*

Chapter I focuses on the twofold role of the Holy See as supreme government of the Roman Catholic Church and subject of international law which participates in the international system as a sovereign, independent and organized entity. Initially, it examines the foundations and the history of the international subjectivity of the Holy See. Subsequently, it illustrates the action of the Holy See in the international sphere, including the principles, instruments and aims of its diplomacy. After investigating the theoretical underpinnings of the Holy See's international personality, the chapter elucidates the relationship between the Holy See and the VCS in order to defuse any conceptual overlap between the two entities. The chapter closes by singling out the 'Chinese anomaly' among the seventeen states that, to date, do not have diplomatic relations with the Holy See.

Chapter II traverses the history of relations between the Catholic Church and China from the XIII century to the early 1990s. Its purpose is providing historical background on the main political, diplomatic and cultural issues that characterized the centuries of contacts and mutual discovery between the Holy See and China. The chapter is divided into three sections, each dedicated to the analysis of an historical period. The first section covers the long centuries from the initial contacts in the XIII century to the 1920s. The second section treats the years from the 1930s to the early 1950s. It particularly focuses on the Manchukuo imbroglio, the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Holy See and the Chinese Nationalist Government, and the founding of the CPCA. The third section considers the period from the mid 1950s to the 1990s, from the lack of dialogue

during the decades of Mao's chairmanship to the overtures of Deng Xiaoping's years.

Chapter III analyzes the last decade of Sino-Pontifical interaction, a period marked by the Holy See's firm determination to improve relations with the PRC, which has led to the intensification of the diplomatic efforts toward China. The chapter highlights the ambivalence of Chinese response to the Holy See's overtures: partial openings were contradicted by acts of intransigence. The chapter finds that, during this period, the Holy See also achieved important results toward the unity of Chinese Catholics. In addition, the analysis emphasizes that the issue of 'Vatican interference in China's internal affairs, including in the name of religion,' has clearly emerged as the main obstacle to diplomatic normalization. On the other hand, the chapter points out, the Chinese demand that the Holy See adheres to the One-China principle and sever diplomatic relations with Taipei, does not appear to be an impassable barrier.

Chapter IV, which is devoted to the analysis of Benedict XVI's letter to the Chinese Catholics, shifts the focus to contemporary developments and options in Sino-Pontifical relations. The Papal letter, in fact, represents a watershed between the past and the future of the Holy See's *Sinopolitik*. The chapter opens the analysis of the Papal document by individuating and examining the four major political-diplomatic issues addressed by Benedict XVI. Subsequently, the chapter highlights the points of difference and similarity between the reaction of the Chinese leadership and that of the apparatchiks in charge of religious affairs. Lastly, the chapter recounts the Holy See's cautious comments on the unclear Chinese response to the Papal message, and highlights the line of prudence that Rome is following.



Chapter V, investigates the first of the two main factors that appear to frustrate the Holy See's efforts toward diplomatic normalization with the PRC. This factor, which is endogenous to the Church, is the rivalry between two factions that strive to shape Pontifical China diplomacy. The chapter begins by illustrating the tension between the spiritual mission of the Church and its need to operate within a worldly international political order and the resultant problematic coexistence of idealism and realism in the Holy See's geopolitics. The chapter then analyzes the rivalry between the two factions, one 'idealist' and the other one 'realist', and underlines that the factional struggle - due to its a wide resonance in the mass media - is not confined to clergymen, but also involves journalists, academics, and politicians. The analysis also considers the ways in which sectors of the Chinese state apparatus that are against the establishment of relations with the Holy See take advantage of this rivalry. In conclusion, the chapter identifies the three main steps that, since the beginning of 2007, Benedict XVI and his close collaborators have undertaken with the aim of defusing the confrontation between the two factions.

Chapter VI is devoted to an analysis of the major exogenous (external to the Catholic Church) cause of the diplomatic impasse between the Holy See and Beijing: the conflict of authority between the Catholic Church and the Chinese state. The chapter maintains that this conflict originates from the differences between the institutional and doctrinal system of the Catholic Church and the institutional and ideological reality of the Chinese Party-State. The chapter opens by delivering a diachronic excursus on the principles of China's religious policy, from the Imperial era to present day. In the light of the primarily cultural-ideological nature of the conflict of authority, the chapter subsequently examines

the roots of the conflict, by using the concepts of adaptation and independence as analytical tools to investigate the ideological motivations of the Chinese government. The chapter confronts these concepts with the notion of *libertas Ecclesiae* - the Church's independence from secular influence - underlining its social and political implications. In this last section, the chapter then investigates the ideological drivers behind the Party-State's determined pursuit of control over the Church in China by using the theoretical concepts of two major Western philosophers of the XIX century: Georg Hegel and Karl Marx.

Chapter VII analyzes the main problems that the two parties have in normalizing their relations. Firstly, the chapter introduces the parties' major objectives in negotiating the establishment of diplomatic relations. The analysis will then traverse the two principal obstacles - the 'interference of the Catholic Church in the internal affairs of China in the name of religion' and the Holy See's recognition of Taipei - that, according to Beijing, obstruct progress toward diplomatic relations. Regarding the first problem, the chapter maintains that it coalesced into a dispute over the appointment of bishops and, after making a diachronic excursus into the modalities of episcopal selection, it examines the forms of intervention of political authorities into this process. In addition, the chapter advances a hypothesis of a mutually acceptable procedure for the designation of Catholic bishops in China. The chapter then shifts to investigating the significance of the Taiwan issue, explaining its relevant but not determinant role in the diplomatic impasse.

Chapter VIII concludes the analysis of the problematic relations between the Holy See and the PRC. Firstly, it examines two models that the Chinese government could follow in order to achieve diplomatic normalization with the Holy See: the

Soviet/Russian and the Vietnamese models. The chapter refutes the objection - based on the cultural, political and institutional dissimilarities between the PRC and the Soviet Union/Russia - that the Russian model is inapplicable to China, pointing out that such a model has been productively adopted by Vietnam. After considering the significant but not radical differences between the religious policies of Beijing and Hanoi, the analysis identifies the Chinese leaders' perception of Catholicism as the main cause of China's reluctance to shift from diplomatic contacts and symbolic gestures to formal negotiations. On this basis, the chapter suggests that Rome could enact confidence building measures, in particular cultural and welfare projects, aimed at promoting a new understanding of Catholicism among the Chinese state apparatus. The chapter ends by noting that, due to the present factional dynamics of the Communist Party of China (CPC), only a widespread change of mentality within the Party might eventually lead to the establishment of diplomatic relations between the supreme government of the Catholic Church and Beijing.

## ***- Chapter I -***

### ***The Holy See as a Subject of International Law***

#### ***Introduction***

While it is generally known what the People's Republic of China (PRC) is, what the Holy See is and does is far less well known. Before introducing the issue of the relations between the Holy See and China, for the sake of conceptual clarity, it is essential to explain what the expression 'Holy See' means and explain the unique position that the Holy See enjoys in the international system. It would be very difficult for the reader to understand the dynamics of the relations between the Holy See and Beijing without being aware of the uniqueness and 'otherness' of the Holy See as an international actor. For the same reason, it is necessary to develop a distinction - as unequivocal as possible - between the Holy See and the Vatican City State (VCS). In fact, while in the media and in popular literature the Holy See is frequently confused with the VCS - and the noun 'Vatican' is commonly used also to signify the Holy See or the Catholic Church as a whole - in the academic environment and diplomatic arena the distinction between the two and its implications are well known, although not universally acknowledged. With these aims in mind, after explaining the meaning of the term 'Holy See' and the institutional nature of the Vatican-based entity, this chapter will illustrate the international role of the Holy See, including the instruments, guidelines and objectives of its diplomatic action. Subsequently, this chapter will investigate the

foundations of the international subjectivity of the Holy See and the history of its international profile, clarifying the intricate and complex relationship between the Holy See and the VCS. The chapter will then focus on the particular ‘Chinese anomaly’ among the states that, currently, do not entertain diplomatic relations with the Holy See.

### *The Apostolic See*

In Catholic terminology a see, from the Latin word *sedes* (seat), is a ‘seat of authority’. Roman Catholic bishops possess seats of spiritual authority and the place where a bishop resides in the territory of his jurisdiction is, by extension, called a see. From ancient times, the Roman diocese, the seat of authority of the chief apostle Peter, has been known as the ‘Apostolic See’ and, with reference to the enthronement ceremony of its bishop, it is also called the ‘Holy See’. In terms of actual governance the expression ‘Holy See’ refers specifically to the sum of the authority, jurisdiction, and sovereignty vested in the Pope, as Vicar of Christ and Head of the College of Bishops, and - less strictly - in the Roman Curia<sup>1</sup> to govern

---

<sup>1</sup> The Curia is the central administration of the Church, since, according to canon 360 of the Code of Canon Law, the internal ecclesiastical law that governs the Catholic Church, the Pope “usually conducts the affairs of the universal Church through the Roman Curia which performs its function in his name and by his authority for the good and service of the churches.” The Roman Curia “consists of the Secretariat of State or the Papal Secretariat, the Council for the Public Affairs of the Church, congregations, tribunals, and other institutes; the constitution and competence of all these are defined in special law.” (Holy See, *Code of Canon Law*, Can. 360, English translation, Washington DC, Canon Law Society of America, 1998, [http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG1104/\\_INDEX.HTM](http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG1104/_INDEX.HTM). Accessed 12 February 2007). “The Roman Curia is more or less equivalent to your national government, only it functions as a universal government, through which the Pope normally conducts the affairs of his office, be they questions concerning the Catholic Church throughout the world or touching his relations with States. The Roman Curia is, therefore, an instrument in the hands of the pontiff. It does not operate by its own right or on its own initiative, but in unity with and dependent on the authority of the Pope. Of course, there is the ‘rule of law’ and a distinction of powers, in conformity to the general norms of the Catholic Church that define the spheres of competence of the executive organs and guarantees autonomy of the judiciary. The Roman Curia is composed of roughly thirty Dicasteries or

the Church. It thus defines the central government of the Catholic Church.<sup>2</sup> Due to the transnational but centralized organization of the Catholic Church, and to its centuries-old role in human affairs, the Holy See is widely recognized as a sovereign subject of international law,<sup>3</sup> and conducts an intense diplomatic activity. Therefore, it is the supreme authority of the Catholic Church, not the Church as a community of believers, which has access to diplomatic relations. As Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran said, “the Holy See is not a state, but a sovereign moral force, the expression of the Papacy on the international scene.”<sup>4</sup>

The international activity of the Holy See is manifested under different aspects: the right of active and passive legation; the exercise of *ius contrahendi* in stipulating treaties; the participation in intergovernmental organizations, such as those under the auspices of the United Nations Organization; and mediation initiatives in situations of conflict.<sup>5</sup> The diplomatic activities of the Holy See are performed - in

---

Departments, more or less equivalent to your government Ministries.” (Giovanni Lajolo, “The Nature and Function of Papal Diplomacy” in *Holy See and Republic of Singapore, 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations between the Republic of Singapore and the Holy See. 1981-2006*, Singapore, The Apostolic Nunciature in Singapore, 2006, p. 14).

<sup>2</sup> According to canon 361 of the Code of Canon Law, by the name of “Holy See” one understands “not only the Roman Pontiff but also the Secretariat of State, the Council for the Public Affairs of the Church and other institutions of the Roman Curia” (Holy See, *Code of Canon Law*, Can. 361).

<sup>3</sup> The following statement of Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran clearly illustrates the international status of the Holy See: “International law does not provide a precise definition of the word ‘power’, Rather, it prefers to speak of a ‘subject of international law’ when it refers to political relations between States. It does so in order to affirm their unity and their organization, their independence and their equality. In this sense, then, the Holy See is truly a subject of international law; it actively participates in international juridical activities as a sovereign, independent and organized entity. (Jean-Louis Tauran, *Is the Holy See a Political Power?*, p. 1).

<sup>4</sup> Jean-Louis Tauran as quoted in Nicholas J. Hercules, “Holy See Diplomacy: a study of non-alignment in the post-World War Two era”, *Catholic Culture*, 5 January 1999, <http://www.catholicculture.org/library/view.cfm?recnum=798>. Accessed 11 January 2007.

Archbishop Tauran has been the Holy See’s Secretary for Relations with States from December 1990 to October 2003. He was elevated to the Cardinalate on October 2003 and currently is the President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue.

<sup>5</sup> Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, “Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church”, Vatican City State, 2 April 2004, [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/justpeace/documents/rc\\_pc\\_justpeace\\_doc\\_20060526\\_compendio-dott-soc\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20060526_compendio-dott-soc_en.html). Accessed 7 March 2007.

the name of the Pope and with his authority - by the Secretariat of State,<sup>6</sup> headed by the Secretary of State,<sup>7</sup> through its Section for Relations with States,<sup>8</sup> which directs the Pontifical diplomatic service. The diplomatic service - “the product of an ancient and proven practice”<sup>9</sup> - is the instrument by which the Holy See seeks to advance its own interests in the international arena, namely, to ensure conditions in which Catholics can freely practise their religion and evangelization can be pursued.<sup>10</sup> The official line of the Holy See is that the aim of its diplomacy “is not only the freedom of the Church (*libertas Ecclesiae*) but also the defence and promotion of human dignity, as well as a social order based on the values of justice, truth, freedom and love”.<sup>11</sup> This stance has been recently confirmed by the current Secretary of State, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, who has declared that: “Holy See

---

<sup>6</sup> “The Secretariat of State is the first and the largest of these Dicasteries. It closely collaborates with the Pope in the daily running of affairs. It is presided by the Cardinal Secretary of State [...] When you hear of the Secretariat of State, think of a prime minister’s office or presidential cabinet, interior ministry and ministry of foreign affairs rolled into one, and you get a picture pretty close to what the Secretariat of State does.” (Giovanni Lajolo, “The Nature and Function of Papal Diplomacy” in *Holy See and Republic of Singapore, 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations between the Republic of Singapore and the Holy See. 1981-2006*, p. 14).

<sup>7</sup> “The Secretariat of State is presided over by a Cardinal who assumes the title of Secretary of State. As the Pope’s first collaborator in the governance of the universal Church, the Cardinal Secretary of State is the one primarily responsible for the diplomatic and political activity of the Holy See, in some circumstances representing the person of the Supreme Pontiff himself.” (Holy See, “The Secretariat of State”, [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/secretariat\\_state/documents/rc\\_seg-st\\_12101998\\_profile\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/secretariat_state/documents/rc_seg-st_12101998_profile_en.html). Accessed 15 February 2007).

<sup>8</sup> The Secretariat of State is composed of two sections, the first being the Section for General Affairs, under the direction of the Substitute for General Affairs. This section “handles anything entrusted to it by the Holy Father, as well as matters of daily business which do not fall within the competence of other dicasteries. It fosters relations with these departments, with the bishops, and with the diplomatic missions of the Holy See.” (*Global Catholic Network*, “The See of Peter - Secretariat of State”, July 2007, <http://www.ewtn.com/HolySee/Curia/Secretariat.asp>. Accessed 12 July 2007). The second section is the Section for Relations with States, headed by the Secretary for Relations with States. In the words of Cardinal Giovanni Lajolo, former Secretary for Relations with States, “The Section for Relations with States would be equivalent to your Foreign Ministry. It has the task of dealing with heads of States and of Governments, of fostering relations, especially those of a diplomatic nature, with States and other subjects of public international law, and dealing with matters of common interest, promoting the good of the Church and of civil society by means of concordats and agreements. It oversees the activity of the Holy See with international organizations, like the United Nations, concerning questions of a public nature.” (Giovanni Lajolo, “The Nature and Function of Papal Diplomacy”, in *Holy See and Republic of Singapore, 25th Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations between the Republic of Singapore and the Holy See. 1981-2006*, pp. 14-15).

<sup>9</sup> Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*.

<sup>10</sup> Eric Clark, *Corps Diplomatique*, London, Allen Lane, 1973, p. 235.

<sup>11</sup> Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/justpeace/documents/rc\\_pc\\_justpeace\\_doc\\_20060526\\_compendio-dott-soc\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20060526_compendio-dott-soc_en.html). Accessed 10 March 2007.

diplomacy contributes with its own means to dialogue and collaboration with civil community and its authorities, which must serve the integral good of the person. [...] The interests that the Church and the Holy See pursue are not for their own advantages but seek only the true good of man and humanity.”<sup>12</sup> Ecclesiastics chosen to serve in the Pope’s diplomatic service receive special training at the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy, the school of diplomacy of the Holy See.<sup>13</sup> Overseas missions, called nunciatures<sup>14</sup> and ordinarily headed by the Papal Nuncios, the equivalent of ambassadors,<sup>15</sup> are composed of counsellors, auditors, secretaries and attachés. The Nuncios, who usually are titular bishops or archbishops,<sup>16</sup> have a double function - representing the Pope before the civil government and also before the local Church. They differ from Apostolic Delegates with whom they are often confused. An Apostolic Delegate, unlike a Nuncio, is accredited only to the local Church of the country to which he is assigned, because diplomatic relations between that country and the Apostolic See are not yet established. However, it should be kept in mind that “the principal agent

---

<sup>12</sup> Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone as quoted in Tiziana Campisi, “Il Cardinale Bertone: la diplomazia vaticana al servizio del vero bene dell’uomo”, *Vatican Radio*, 23 February 2007, <http://www.radiovaticana.org/en1/Articolo.asp?c=119678>. Accessed 25 February 2007.

<sup>13</sup> In Italian, *Pontificia Accademia Ecclesiastica* (Pontificia Accademia Ecclesiastica, “Cenni Storici 1701-2001”, 2001, [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_academies/acdeccles/documents/storia\\_it.htm](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_academies/acdeccles/documents/storia_it.htm). Accessed 20 February 2007).

<sup>14</sup> The first permanent Nunciature dates back to the XVI century, when Alexander VI sent Angelo Leonini as Pontifical resident to the Most Serene Republic of Venice in 1500. Leonini was the first Apostolic Nuncio, as we understand the term today. (Vatican Secret Archives, “The Papal Delegations”, <http://asv.vatican.va/en/arch/delegations.htm>. Accessed 15 February 2008).

<sup>15</sup> “The Pope’s ambassador is known as Apostolic Nuncio who is accredited to a country with full diplomatic ties, [...] Sometimes a resident pontifical representative covers concurrently more than one country.” (Holy See and Republic of Singapore, *25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations between the Republic of Singapore and the Holy See. 1981-2006*, p. 23).

<sup>16</sup> Canon 376 reads: “Bishops to whom the care of some diocese is entrusted are called diocesan; others are called titular.” (Holy See, *Code of Canon Law*, Can. 376). A titular bishop is the holder of a titular see, which is a nominal (often former) episcopal or archiepiscopal see without an actual pastoral flock.



of Papal diplomatic action is the Pope himself, with his pastoral ministry, his words, his travels, his meetings.”<sup>17</sup>

At present, the Holy See entertains full diplomatic relations with 176 countries and with the European Union and the Sovereign Military Order of Malta. It also has relations of a special nature with the Russian Federation and with the Palestine Liberation Organization.<sup>18</sup> Nowadays, the Holy See maintains “over 200 permanent representatives to states or international organizations”<sup>19</sup> and, in addition, keeps two apostolic nuncios at the disposition of the Secretariat of State and the President of the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy.<sup>20</sup> Seventy-eight countries maintain permanent resident diplomatic missions accredited to the Holy See in Rome.<sup>21</sup> The rest have missions located outside Italy with dual accreditation.<sup>22</sup> On the multilateral stage, the Pope is represented in thirty-three intergovernmental organizations and groups.<sup>23</sup> Although it has membership in several bodies of a technical<sup>24</sup> or humanitarian character, the Holy See prefers to remain an observer,

---

<sup>17</sup> Jean Louis Tauran, *Magisterial Lecture on the Theme ‘the Presence of the Holy See in the International Organizations’*, magisterial lecture, Catholic University of the Sacred Heart, Milan (Italy), 22 April 2002, <http://www.ewtn.com/library/CURIA/STATINT.HTM>. Accessed 21 February 2007.

<sup>18</sup> *Holy See Press Office*, “Bilateral and Multilateral Relations of the Holy See”, 31 May 2007, [http://www.vatican.va/news\\_services/press/documentazione/documents/corpo-diplomatico\\_index\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/news_services/press/documentazione/documents/corpo-diplomatico_index_en.html). Accessed 3 June 2007. International organizations of which the Holy See is a full member include: the Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the International Conference on Free Trade Unions, the International Telecommunications Union, the Universal Postal Union, and the World Intellectual Property Organization.

<sup>19</sup> Vatican Secret Archives, “The Papal Delegations”.

<sup>20</sup> *EWTN*, “Cardinal Bertone: Diplomacy Serves Humanity, Holy See Doesn’t Seek Its Own Interests”, 28 February 2007, <http://www.ewtn.com/vnews/getstory.asp?number=76355>. Accessed 13 March 2007.

<sup>21</sup> U.S. Department of State, “Background Note: Holy See”. These missions are usually small. Understandably, they have neither commercial nor military attachés.

<sup>22</sup> In order to avoid any confusion between Italian sovereignty and its own, the Holy See does not accept dual accreditation with an embassy located in Italy (U.S. State Department, “Background Note: Holy See”).

<sup>23</sup> Secretariat of State of the Holy See, “Bilateral and Multilateral Relations of the Holy See”.

<sup>24</sup> In these organizations, the Holy See participates *sub speculum aeternitatis*: it does not directly intervene in technical issues but rather upholds some principles according to which those technical issues should, in the Catholic view, be addressed. (Giulio Boldrin, *La Santa Sede e le Organizzazioni Internazionali*, Trieste, Università di Trieste, 2001, p. 170).

permanent or on an informal basis, in the majority of the international organizations to which it adheres.<sup>25</sup> The Holy See in fact regards observer status as the form of participation that is most consonant with its specific nature and its objectives, which it claims are principally of a religious and moral character. This could appear a self-limitation, but it carries the advantage of allowing the Holy See to remain *super partes* in specific political problems without losing the right to speak. In the words of Monsignor Celestino Migliore, the current Pontifical representative to the United Nations Organization, “the right to vote and therefore full membership, would involve the Holy See in a direct way in questions of a political, military and economic order which go beyond its purpose.”<sup>26</sup> From the Pontifical point of view, keeping an observer status is then a way to highlight that the rationale of its diplomacy is different from that of states and to reaffirm that, unlike states, its international personality derives from its moral authority and moral leadership, not from any temporal or political dimension. In sum, the Holy See endorses diverse roles and, because of that, a moral superiority and a universal competence.

---

<sup>25</sup> The Holy See has a non-member-state permanent observer status at the following: the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund, the Council of Europe, the Organization of American States, the International Organization for Migration, and the World Tourism Organization (Nicholas J. Hercules, “Holy See Diplomacy: a study of non-alignment in the post-World War Two era”).

<sup>26</sup> Celestino Migliore as quoted in Giovanni Cubeddu, “‘Vatican’ Resolution”, *30Days*, July 2004, <http://www.30giorni.it/us/articolo.asp?id=4008>. Accessed 27 February 2007.

## *The Holy See and the Vatican City State*

In order to better understand the Holy See's claim to *alteritas*, that is 'otherness', it is necessary to look into the origin and the history of the international character of Peter's See and analyze the intricate relationship between the Holy See and the VCS. The origin of the international subjectivity of the Holy See is conventionally traced back to the fifth century, well before the constitution of the Papal States,<sup>27</sup> when the first emissary of the Apostolic See was sent to Constantinople to the Eastern Roman Imperial court.<sup>28</sup> During the Middle Ages, within the *Respublica Gentium Christianorum* and the Holy Roman Empire (in which the Emperor and the Papacy were considered the highest authorities), the Holy See enjoyed full international subjectivity and possessed even a type of supra-state character<sup>29</sup> due to its centrality in the international system.<sup>30</sup> After the Peace of Westphalia (1648), which marked the creation of the modern international order, the international position of the Holy See was made equivalent to that of the states, although its international character remained beyond question. In fact, in a new order based on the principles of the equality of all states and of non-intervention of one state in the internal affairs of another, the Papacy lost its centrality and its 'superior status'.

---

<sup>27</sup> Although since the VI century the Pope had exercised *de facto* sovereignty over Rome and large areas of Central Italy, the independence of the Papal States was sanctioned only by the 962 *Diploma Ottonianum*, issued by Holy Roman Emperor Otto I.

<sup>28</sup> In 453, once the Council of Chalcedon was concluded, Pope St Leo the Great asked his Legate, Julian of Cos, who had followed the work of the Council, to stay there to apply the decisions of the assembly. To this end, he provided him with two Letters of Credence: one to accredit him with the local Catholic hierarchy, and one for the Emperor of Constantinople, Theodosius. (Jean Louis Tauran, *Magisterial Lecture on the Theme "The Presence of the Holy See in the International Organizations"*).

<sup>29</sup> Sergio Ferlito, *L'attività internazionale della Santa Sede*, Milano, Giuffrè, 1988, pp. 162-163.

<sup>30</sup> "Indeed, the relations between the Holy See and the Christian states formed the original international community." (Matthew N. Bathon, "The Atypical International Status of the Holy See", *Vanderbilt Journal of Transnational Law*, Vol. 34, May 2001, p. 635).

Moreover, the 'special nature' of the Holy See conflicted with the new organic conception of international subjectivity resulting from the basic homogeneity of the other members of the Westphalian system. Nevertheless, the Holy See retained its membership in the international community, if nothing else because of the sovereignty that it exercised over the Papal States which enabled the Pope to be regarded and act - besides as the head of the Catholic Church - as one of the Italian and European princes.<sup>31</sup>

Between 1860 and 1870 the Kingdom of Italy conquered and incorporated the Papal States. With the demise of its dominions, the Holy See was deprived of what the prevailing state-centric international law doctrine defined as one of the foundations of international subjectivity: a territory over which to exercise its sovereignty. The Holy See, however, remained an actor in the international sphere, continuing to exercise the rights proper to a subject of international law: the right to active and passive delegation, the exercise of *ius contrahendi* in stipulating treaties, and the *ius foederum ac tractatum*, that is the right to stipulate with states covenants and concordats that qualified, in their wording and application, as treaties.<sup>32</sup> Last but not least, between 1870 and the turn of the century, the Holy See carried on an intense activity of arbitration on the mandate of several states, even non-Catholic ones.<sup>33</sup> According to Catholic jurisprudence, the international activity of the Holy See during that period, displayed in the aforementioned ways, should be regarded as the most persuasive proof of its continuing international legal

---

<sup>31</sup> Giovanni Rulli, "La Santa Sede e il problema della pace", *La Civiltà Cattolica*, Vol. 1, No. 2990, 15 January 1975, p. 190.

<sup>32</sup> Arturo Carlo Jemolo, *Lezioni di diritto ecclesiastico*, Milano, Giuffrè, 1979, p. 253.

<sup>33</sup> Mediation between Spain and Germany on the Caroline Islands in 1885; mediation between Britain and Portugal on the rights of navigation in Eastern Africa in 1886; mediation between Portugal and Free State of Congo on 1891; mediation of between Britain and United States on the borders of Guyana in 1894; mediation between the Republic of Haiti and Dominican Republic in 1895; mediation between Argentina and Chile in 1896. (Giulio Boldrin, *La Santa Sede e le Organizzazioni Internazionali*, p. 121).

capacity and personality, distinct from and independent of those of the Papal States. Equally, the stipulation of the Treaty of the Lateran<sup>34</sup> in 1929, in which the Holy See participated as a contracting party in a typical convention of international law, on an equal footing with the Italian State, necessarily implied the pre-existence of the international subjectivity of the Holy See. Failing this, a treaty would have been certainly improper as a legal instrument.<sup>35</sup>

The Lateran Treaty instituted a new state: the VCS. By that treaty in fact, Italy recognized the full property rights and exclusive sovereignty of the Holy See over the VCS as it is made up at present. It is a tiny territorial entity, the smallest micro-state in the world, with a surface area of just 0.44 square kilometres.<sup>36</sup> The Roman Pontiff is the sovereign of the state who possesses full legislative, executive and judicial powers.<sup>37</sup> The VCS was created for a unique reason. As the letter of the preamble to the Treaty states: “[...] for the purpose of assuring the absolute and visible independence of the Holy See, likewise to guarantee its indisputable sovereignty in international matters, it has been found necessary to create under special conditions the Vatican City.”<sup>38</sup> The VCS, in other words, was constituted in order to make it possible for the Pope to exercise freely his ministry of governing

---

<sup>34</sup> The 1929 Treaty of the Lateran, also called The Lateran Pacts, contained three sections: the Treaty of Conciliation (27 articles) which established Vatican City as an independent state, restoring the civil sovereignty of the Pope as a monarch; the Financial Convention annexed to the treaty (3 articles) which compensated the Holy See for loss of the Papal States; and the Concordat (45 articles), which dealt with the Roman Catholic Church's ecclesiastical relations with the Italian State.

<sup>35</sup> Luigi Rodelli and Mario Berruti, *Patti Lateranensi e piccola antologia della legislazione italiana*, Varese (Italy), Dall'Oglio, 1968, p. 12.

<sup>36</sup> Stato della Città del Vaticano, “Portale istituzionale”, 2007-2008, <http://www.vaticanstate.va/IT/homepage.htm>. Accessed 10 February 2008.

<sup>37</sup> From a constitutional point of view, the VCS can be thus defined as a monarchy which is absolute (the Pope is an absolute monarch), elective (the Pope is elected by the College of Cardinals), patrimonial (the power within the state is extremely centralized and flows from the personal authority of the ruler) and confessional (the Pope is also the head of Catholicism). (Giulio Boldrin, *La Santa Sede e le Organizzazioni Internazionali*, p. 21).

<sup>38</sup> Benedict Williamson, *The Treaty of the Lateran*, London, Burns Oates & Washbourne Ltd., 1929, p. 42.

the Catholic Church, including the conduct of diplomatic relations. Thus there is a functionally 'organic relationship' between the VCS and the Holy See. Monsignor Attilio Nicora, President of the Administration of the Patrimony of the Apostolic See, explained this relationship in clear words: "In our actual juridical culture and actual system of socio-political organization, the maximum form of guarantee of independence is certainly the reality of a state, even if it is rooted in a very meagre territory. [...] The Holy See is independent in itself, but it finds in this reality of a small state a sign and visible form of assurance of its independence."<sup>39</sup>

Several scholars, founding their objections on the aforementioned 'organic relationship', have questioned the statehood of the VCS. In their opinion, if the only *raison d'être* of the VCS is providing a territorial identity for the Holy See, it should not be considered a proper state. Some authors, for example, see some points of similarity between the status of the VCS and that of the headquarters of international organizations. In particular, some have gone as far as finding a sort of parallel between the legal position of the headquarters of the United Nations within the United States of America and the relation between the VCS and Italy.<sup>40</sup> The assertions of these scholars, however, are contradicted both by the factual reality of the VCS and its legal status.<sup>41</sup> Although it is certainly correct to define the VCS as an 'instrumental state'<sup>42</sup> or a 'support state',<sup>43</sup> from a strictly international law

---

<sup>39</sup> Attilio Nicora as quoted in John Allen, "Interview with Cardinal Attilio Nicora, President of the Administration of the Patrimony of the Holy See", 6 February 2004, *National Catholic Reporter*, <http://ncronline.org/mainpage/specialdocuments/nicora.htm>. Accessed 25 February 2007.

<sup>40</sup> Pio Ciprotti, "Funzione, figura e valore della Santa Sede", *Concilium*, No. 8, 1970, pp. 79-90.

<sup>41</sup> "While theoretical disputes continue as to the requirements for international personality and the definition of a 'state' in international law, it is generally accepted that the Holy See does have, if atypical, a status in international relations. Thus, it is clear that the Holy See will continue to play a role in international relations." (Matthew N. Bathon, "The Atypical International Status of the Holy See", p. 599).

<sup>42</sup> Francesco Finocchiaro, *Diritto Ecclesiastico*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1997, p. 233.

perspective it nonetheless possesses the three constitutive elements of a modern state as identified by doctrine: a permanent population and a clearly defined territory, albeit on a minute scale;<sup>44</sup> an effective government over the extent of that territory; and a displayed capacity to engage in international relations, including the ability to fulfil international treaty obligations.<sup>45</sup> The VCS therefore has a state personality under international law and can enter into international agreements, having the legal and operational capacity to act as a state, at domestic as well as international levels. However, it is the Holy See which represents the VCS internationally.<sup>46</sup> In fact, when the Holy See enters into agreements for the VCS, it uses the formula: “acting on behalf and in the interest of the State of Vatican City”.<sup>47</sup> States and international organizations, then, do not entertain diplomatic relations with VCS, but with the Holy See.<sup>48</sup>

The Pontifical officials, diplomats and jurists are fully aware of the doubts about the nature of the VCS, and actively intervene in the academic debate, often

---

<sup>43</sup> “A miniscule support-State that guarantees the spiritual freedom of the Pope with the minimum territory” (Jean Louis Tauran, *Magisterial Lecture on the Theme ‘the Presence of the Holy See in the International Organizations’*).

<sup>44</sup> The VCS has 790 citizens and also deploys the smallest army in the world: the Swiss Guard, which presently consists of a total of 100 men. (U.S. Department of State, “Background Note: Holy See”).

<sup>45</sup> Article I of the 1933 Montevideo Convention on Rights and Duties of States reads: “The state as a person of international law should possess the following qualifications: a ) a permanent population; b ) a defined territory; c ) government; and d) capacity to enter into relations with the other states.” (Convention on Rights and Duties of States, Montevideo, 26 December 1933, <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/intdip/interam/intam03.htm>. Accessed 25 February 2007).

<sup>46</sup> “Which is the subject of international law: the Holy See or the Vatican City State? The answer is both are subjects of international law. In fact, since the Vatican City State itself has juridical personality in accordance with the international law, it can enter - and, in fact, has entered - into international agreements as well, specifically regarding technical questions, like postal services, telecommunications, media etc. In practice, however, it is the Holy See which internationally represents the Vatican City State.” (Giovanni Lajolo, “The Nature and Function of Papal Diplomacy” in Holy See and Republic of Singapore, *25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations between the Republic of Singapore and the Holy See. 1981-2006*, p. 14).

<sup>47</sup> Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations, “A Short History of the Holy See's Diplomacy”, [http://www.holyseemission.org/short\\_history.html](http://www.holyseemission.org/short_history.html). Accessed 1 March 2007. The Holy See participates under the denomination “Vatican City State” only to the International Telecommunications Union and the Universal Postal Union, two specialized agencies of the United Nations.

<sup>48</sup> In October 1957, in order to avoid uncertainty in the Holy See's relations with the United Nations, it was affirmed that relations are established between the United Nations and the Holy See.

resorting to figures of speech. In 1974, for instance, Monsignor Agostino Casaroli, then Secretary of the Council for Public Affairs of the Church, insisted on the statehood of the VCS, but conceded that: "Even those who are willing to recognize the minuscule Vatican State the right to be part of the community of states cannot escape the impression of being ...in front of an insignificant pedestal, on which however is posed, with its wings outstretched to cover every part of the globe, an independent and sovereign power: respected and esteemed, or mistrusted and hindered, but that in any case shines for its stature, history and influence."<sup>49</sup> Dag Hammarskjöld, the second United Nations Secretary-General, probably cut through the Gordian knot of the complex Holy See-VCS symbiosis when, back in 1957, he declared : "When I ask for an audience at the Vatican, I am not going to see the King of Vatican City, but the Head of the Catholic Church."<sup>50</sup> This statement reflects the view of the Pontifical international law doctrine, which maintains that the dichotomy between the Holy See and the VCS is resolved in the person of the Roman Pontiff, who is the sovereign of the VSC and, at the same time, is identified with the Holy See. According to the logic of this approach, it might be said that the VCS and the Holy See belong to the same, 'biune', reality.

In the last three decades, the Holy See has obtained an ever growing recognition: when Pope John Paul II was elected Supreme Pontiff, the Holy See had diplomatic relations with eighty-four countries; today, this number has risen to 176.<sup>51</sup> The fact that such a large number of states recognize the Holy See should be considered the ultimate proof of its international subjectivity. All these countries, *ça va sans dire*,

---

<sup>49</sup> Agostino Casaroli as quoted in Giovanni Rulli, *La Santa Sede e il problema della pace*, *La Civiltà Cattolica*, 1975, pp. 190-191.

<sup>50</sup> Dag Hammarskjöld as quoted in Giulio Boldrin, *La Santa Sede e le Organizzazioni Internazionali*, p. 150.

<sup>51</sup> As previously noted, the Russian Federation is not included in this number because the diplomatic relation between Moscow and the Holy See are of a 'special nature'.



accept the distinct international character both of the Holy See and the VCS. The governments of those states certainly respect the moral authority of the Pope and acknowledge his staunch commitment to promote peace amongst nations. In any case, their motivations for choosing to conduct formal relations with the Holy See do probably lie elsewhere. States, in fact, are fully aware that the Roman Pontiff, as leader of a billion Catholics throughout the world, has great moral influence. They thus seek to ensure that the Holy See remains, if not favourable, at least not hostile to them: the role played by John Paul II in the breakdown of the Communist regimes in Eastern Europe is a formidable reminder of the power of the Papacy.<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, the Vatican Palace is a diplomatic hub of prime relevance and, as the capillary structure of the Catholic Church reaches even the most remote corners of the world, it is also an excellent listening post. Hence, states have relations with the Holy See primarily for “pragmatic reasons.”<sup>53</sup> A sure sign that relations with the Pope are regarded as important in a practical sense is that numerous Islamic majority countries and all the countries with a mainly Protestant or Orthodox population, which have no strong religious bonds with the Papacy figure among the aforementioned 176 states.

If the political-diplomatic advantages of entertaining formal relations with the Holy See are recognized by such a large number of states, it must be assumed that, in the case of the seventeen countries that, to date, do not have diplomatic relations with the Apostolic See, these advantages must be outweighed by concerns about the disadvantages of the diplomatic relations. The seventeen states are: Afghanistan, Bhutan, Botswana, Brunei, the Comores, Laos, Malaysia, the Maldives, Mauritania,

---

<sup>52</sup> Andrew Nagorski, “The Power of Pope John Paul II”, *Notre Dame Magazine*, Winter 2002-03, pp. 1-2.

<sup>53</sup> Eric Clark, *Corps Diplomatique*, pp. 235-236.

Myanmar, North Korea, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Tuvalu, Vietnam, and the People's Republic of China.<sup>54</sup> While it is relatively simple to fathom the motivations of introverted or solipsistic regimes like Myanmar and North Korea, or of strictly Islamic countries like Wahabist Saudi Arabia, understanding why the Chinese giant, destined to be the protagonist of the XXI century, still refrains from establishing diplomatic relations with the Pope requires a thorough analysis which will be undertaken in the following chapters.

### *Conclusion*

This chapter elucidated what the Holy See is and does, clarifying that the term 'Holy See' means neither the Catholic Church nor the VCS. The Holy See, as explained by the chapter, is the supreme government of the Roman Catholic Church and exerts temporal authority over the VCS, a minuscule sovereign state which was established in 1929 to "guarantee the Pope's moral and spiritual independence."<sup>55</sup> Actually, it is the tension between those two dimensions that gives the Apostolic See a resilience on the international stage.<sup>56</sup> The Holy See does not speak only for a geopolitical unit but also for a worldwide fellowship of belief. Besides supporting the defence and the propagation of Catholicism, it acts also as a global voice for human rights, peace, alleviation of poverty. This advocacy

---

<sup>54</sup> In ten of these countries there is no Pontifical envoy present: Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, Bhutan, the People's Republic of China, North Korea, the United Arab Emirates, the Maldives, Oman, Tuvalu and Vietnam. While only Apostolic delegates are at work in another eight countries: four in Africa - Botswana, the Comores, Mauritania and Somalia - and four in Asia - Brunei, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar. (Gianni Cardinale, "Beijing is not the Only Absence", *30Days*, July 2006, <http://www.30giorni.it/us/articolo.asp?id=10813>. Accessed 1 March 2007).

<sup>55</sup> Michael Mendl, "The 'Dream' of the two Columns", *Bosconet*, <http://www.bosconet.aust.com/2columns.html>. Accessed 16 February 2007.

<sup>56</sup> *PBS - Religion & Ethics Newsweekly*, "Interview to J. Peter Pham", Episode 1132, 11 April 2008, <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/week1132/pham.html>. Accessed 14 April 2008.

contributed to raise dramatically the international profile of the Apostolic See over the second half of the XX century. Today the See of Peter is, in the words of a former American ambassador to the Holy See, a “huge moral, spiritual superpower.”<sup>57</sup> Such a high prestige is confirmed by the Holy See’s presence in numerous international organizations, first of all in the United Nations, and formal relations with 177 countries. The fact that a major global actor as the PRC does not have diplomatic ties with the Holy See warrants to be investigated, starting from the analysis of the history of Sino-Pontifical relations.

---

<sup>57</sup> James Nicholson as quoted in *PBS - Religion & Ethics Newsweekly*, “Pope Benedict’s Foreign Policy”, 11 April 2008, Episode 1132, <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/week1132/cover.html>. Accessed 14 April 2008.

## **- Chapter II -**

### ***The Historical Evolution of Holy See-China Relations: a Relationship Unfolding over the Centuries***

#### ***Introduction***

The previous chapter has investigated the international subjectivity and the diplomatic action of the Holy See, emphasizing its high international profile and its prominent role in world diplomacy. The chapter has also explained the wide international recognition of the Holy See in terms of the considerable advantages of having formal relations with the *Sancta Sedes*,<sup>1</sup> pointing out that the PRC is one of the few states - and the only great power - that does not have diplomatic relations with the Apostolic See. The first step that must be taken in order to understand the reason why the most ancient and populous state on the planet currently does not entertain formal relations with the most ancient religious institution of the world is to diachronically traverse the unfolding of the relationship between the Holy See and China. In fact, knowledge of the pluri-secular history of Sino-Pontifical relations is essential to identify and understand the factors which, over time, have influenced the Apostolic See's position vis-à-vis the Chinese rulers (and *vice versa*) and presently impede the normalization of relations between Beijing and the 'seat of government' of the Catholic Church. This chapter will cover the history of relations between the Catholic Church and China from their beginning, in the XIII

---

<sup>1</sup> As explained in Chapter I, 'Holy See' is derived from the Latin 'Sancta Sedes', which means 'Holy Chair'.

century, to the early 1990s. Given the time-span and the complexity of these relations, this section has no pretence at being an exhaustive account of the labyrinthine history of the interaction between the Church and the Middle Kingdom, but has the purpose of providing the reader with an historical background on the main political, diplomatic and 'cultural' issues which emerged over centuries of contacts between Rome and *Zhonghua*<sup>2</sup> and of evangelization in China. The last decade of Sino-Pontifical relations will not be treated in this chapter. Given its relevance and implications, it deserves to be covered in detail in a separate chapter. In fact, the events of the late pontificate of John Paul II and the beginning of Benedict XVI's apostolate will be the theme of the next chapter.

*Over the Centuries: from the Middle Ages to the 1920s*

The history of diplomatic contacts and relations between the Holy See and China dates back to the Middle Ages and it is deeply intertwined with the different phases of Christian predication in the Middle Kingdom. In the XIII century Pope Innocentius IV and the King of France Luis IX, hoping to forge an anti-Islamic military alliance with the Mongolian rulers of China, sent several Franciscan and Dominican monks to the Court of the Great Khan. They were not missionaries, but rather emissaries in charge of gathering information and making contact with the Imperial authorities. Among these envoys were Giovanni di Pian del Carpine, who reached Karakorum in 1245, and William of Robruck, who followed in 1253. The first missionary was the Franciscan Giovanni da Montecorvino,<sup>3</sup> who arrived in

---

<sup>2</sup> 'Zhonghua' is the romanization of the Mandarin word for 'China'.

<sup>3</sup> In 1286, Arghun, the Mongolian khan who ruled Persia, sent a request to Pope Nicholas IV through a Nestorian bishop, Bar Sauma, to send Catholic missionaries to the Court of the Great

Kambalik (near present-day Beijing) in 1294 and remained in China until his death in 1328. In 1307 Pope Clement V nominated Montecorvino Archbishop of Beijing and *Summus Archiepiscopus* (Chief Archbishop) of China and sent some friars as his aides. Even after his death, the mission in China endured for the next forty years.<sup>4</sup> Two centuries later, in 1583, Matteo Ricci and Michele Ruggiero, two Jesuits originally based in the Portuguese enclave of Macau, were allowed by the Chinese authorities to reside in Zhaoqing (present-day Guangdong). The two priests methodically pursued the inculturation<sup>5</sup> of Catholicism, living at first as Buddhist monks and later as Confucian intellectuals. After a few years their fluency in Chinese and vast knowledge of cartography, mathematics and astronomy granted them access to the Imperial court.<sup>6</sup> There Ricci gained prominence as astronomer and, mastering the Chinese language, tried to reinterpret the works of Confucius in a Christian sense with the aim of promoting the evangelization of China. After Ricci, many other Jesuits were admitted at the Imperial court as astronomers and, thanks to the favour of the Emperors,<sup>7</sup> the Catholic community of Beijing grew to one-hundred-thousand in the XVIII century.<sup>8</sup> However, from that period the prestige and influence of the Company of Jesus in China began to decline. In fact, the Papal prohibition to participate in the rites in honour of

---

Khan of China, Kúblai Khan, who was well disposed towards Christianity (Giovanni Ricciardi, "Un Francescano alla Corte del Gran Khan", *30Days*, October 2003, <http://www.30giorni.it/it/articolo.asp?id=1695>. Accessed 15 February 2007).

<sup>4</sup> Ibidem

<sup>5</sup> 'Inculturation' is a term used in Christian missiology referring to "the adaptation of the way the Gospel is presented for the specific cultures being evangelized." (*Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Los Angeles - Archdiocesan News Archive*, "Minutes From The San Fernando Regional Council Meeting Of September 16, 2006", 9 October 2006, <http://www.archdiocese.la/news/story.php?newsid=812>. Accessed 3 April 2007).

<sup>6</sup> Mark Stephen Mir, "The Mechanics of Heaven: Jesuit Astronomers at the Qing Court", *Ricci Institute for Chinese-Western Cultural History*, [http://www.usfca.edu/ricci/exhibits/dragon\\_skies/index.htm](http://www.usfca.edu/ricci/exhibits/dragon_skies/index.htm). Accessed 4 March 2007.

<sup>7</sup> "Ricci died in 1610 without ever meeting the Emperor. His successors, however, established themselves as the official court astronomers and headed the government engineering bureaus." (Michael Billington, "Matteo Ricci, the Grand Design, and the Disaster of the 'Rites Controversy'", *Executive Intelligence Review*, Vol. 28, No. 43, 9 November 2001, [http://www.new-fed.com/other/2001/2843m\\_ricci.html#fn1](http://www.new-fed.com/other/2001/2843m_ricci.html#fn1). Accessed 24 January 2007).

<sup>8</sup> Bernardo Cervellera, *Missione Cina*, Ancora Editrice, Milano, 2003, pp. 152-155.

Confucius and of the ancestors exposed Catholicism to the critics of the Confucian *literati*, who started denouncing the Chinese Church as a sect conspiring against the stability of the Middle Kingdom.<sup>9</sup> The Kangxi Emperor listened to those accusations and, with time, came to forbid Christian preaching and evangelism.<sup>10</sup>

Only after its defeat in the First and Second Opium War, respectively in 1842 and 1862, was China forced to permit Christian proselytism again. The 'right of evangelization' was in fact guaranteed in the unequal treaties imposed upon China by the Western powers. Catholic and Protestant missionaries had a free hand and moved to China in large numbers. By then, though, they were regarded by the majority of the Chinese elite as agents of Western imperialism. Even if many missionaries actually made an important contribution to the material and social progress of the country in the second half of the XIX century,<sup>11</sup> some others - especially the Protestants<sup>12</sup> - occasionally acted in a way that confirmed many Chinese in their idea that Christianity was just an 'intellectual weapon' of white people. This idea was corroborated by a certain kind of 'protection' that some European powers imposed over 'their' Catholic missionaries. For instance, the fact that, in 1898 and again in 1918, France, "whose missionaries worked hard to

---

<sup>9</sup> Both Pope Clement XI (in 1704 and again in 1715) and Benedict XIV (in 1742) issued Papal bulls (decrees) against Christian adherence to Confucian beliefs and rites. In addition Benedict XIV demanded that missionaries in China take an oath forbidding them to discuss the issue again. (Dan Li, *China in Transition, 1517-1911*, New York, Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1969, pp. 22-24).

<sup>10</sup> Michael Billington, "Matteo Ricci, the Grand Design, and the Disaster of the 'Rites Controversy'".

<sup>11</sup> For instance, the missionaries built hospitals, dispensaries, schools and orphanages even in the most remote corners of China. (Bernardo Cervellera, *Missione Cina*, p. 155).

<sup>12</sup> For instance, some German missionaries in the Shandong Peninsula furthered the colonial interests of their homeland. (Enrica Collotti Pischel, *Storia dell'Asia Orientale*, Roma, Carocci, 1998, pp. 46-47). Hubertus Hoffmann, founder and President of the New York-based World Security Network Foundation, highlighted the difference between Catholic and Protestant proselytizations in XIX century China. In a 2005 article, Hoffmann wrote: "Protestant proselytization on the part of Anglo/American missionaries was also part of the Western policy of control. In contrast, Catholic missionaries were more restrained." (Hubertus Hoffmann, "The Pope and Beijing", *World Security Network*, 30 November 2005, [http://www.worldsecuritynetwork.com/dsp\\_proposal.cfm?proposal\\_id=209](http://www.worldsecuritynetwork.com/dsp_proposal.cfm?proposal_id=209). Accessed 16 April 2007).

maintain French dominance over Chinese church affairs,”<sup>13</sup> had thwarted China’s efforts to establish diplomatic relations with the Holy See reinforced the impression of Christianity as organic to imperialism.<sup>14</sup> However, after the atrocities of the 1900 Boxer Revolution - during which many missionaries were killed by angry mobs - and the proclamation of the Republic of China in 1912, the Holy See decided to take a more culturally empathetic approach towards China.

With this intention in mind, in 1922 Pope Pius XI appointed Archbishop Celso Costantini as the first Apostolic Delegate to China. Monsignor Costantini was acutely aware of the ‘cultural extraneity’ of Christianity in China and committed to make evangelization more compatible with the Chinese *weltanschauung*.<sup>15</sup> His initiatives in this sense were multi-directional and productive. Soon after his arrival in Beijing, the Apostolic Delegate organized the first Catholic Chinese Conference that set forth the basic principles of the Catholic Mission in China, which was convened in Shanghai in 1924. In 1925 he helped the foundation of the Fu Jen Catholic University in the capital city.<sup>16</sup> The following year, upon his recommendation, six Chinese priests were ordained bishops in Rome. Costantini also instituted several major regional seminaries and a Chinese college in Rome. In 1933, he was recalled to the Holy See and appointed Secretary of the Congregation

---

<sup>13</sup> Gerald Chan, “Sino-Vatican Diplomatic Relations: Problems and Prospects”, *The China Quarterly*, No. 120, December 1989, p. 817.

<sup>14</sup> Paris went to the extent of breaking off relations with the Holy See in order to show its intransigence. (Louis Wei Tsing-sing, “China and the Vatican”, *China Notes*, Vol. 8, No. 4, Autumn 1970).

<sup>15</sup> “Given the rank of archbishop, Costantini reached China in late 1922 and immediately began to push for implementation of the directives outlined by Pope Benedict XV in his missionary encyclical *Maximum illud* (1919).” (Jean-Paul Wiest, “Costantini, Celso 1876-1958, Roman Catholic Church, Shanghai, China”, in Global China Center, *Biographical Dictionary of Chinese Christianity*, December 2005, [http://www.bdcconline.net/bdcc\\_stories/china/shanghai/costantini\\_c.html](http://www.bdcconline.net/bdcc_stories/china/shanghai/costantini_c.html). Accessed 12 March 2007).

<sup>16</sup> In 1929, the Ministry of Education officially recognized Fu Jen as a university. (Fu Jen Catholic University, “History”, *Fu Jen Catholic University*, 2005, [http://www.fju.edu.tw/eng\\_fju/history.htm](http://www.fju.edu.tw/eng_fju/history.htm). Accessed 12 March 2007).



for the Evangelization of Peoples. His successor was Monsignor Mario Zanin, who remained in office until 1946.<sup>17</sup> During his eleven years of service in China, Costantini successfully fostered the inculturation of Catholicism in the Middle Kingdom and paved the way for the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Chinese Nationalist Government and the Holy See.<sup>18</sup>

### *1930s-1950s: Diplomatic Imbroglios, Achievements and Débâcles*

In the 1920s and 1930s China progressively plunged into chaos, being plagued by warlordism, Western exploitation and the civil war raging between the Nationalists (Kuomintang) and the Communists led by Mao. At the same time, Japan was aggressively pursuing the subjugation and the conquest of the country and was already in control of important parts of the Chinese territory. In March 1932, in order to paper over their occupation of resource-rich Manchuria, the Japanese created the puppet state of Manchukuo, placing at its head Puyi, the dethroned Chinese Emperor. The League of Nations refused to recognize the new state that was recognized only by the Empire of Japan.<sup>19</sup> The Catholic Church had eight missions, including vicariates and apostolic prefectures, plus the two provinces of Jehol and Hingan, within the Manchurian territory. Soon, frictions between

---

<sup>17</sup> Bernardo Cervellera, *Missione Cina*. See also Institute of Catholic History of Fu Jen Catholic University, *A Collection of Documents on the History of the 60 Years of Sino-Vatican Diplomatic Relations*, Taipei, Fu Jen Catholic University, 2002.

<sup>18</sup> Jean-Paul Wiest, "Costantini, Celso 1876-1958, Roman Catholic Church, Shanghai, China".

<sup>19</sup> Over the ensuing years, Manchukuo was recognized by two minor Central American states, Fascist Italy, the Soviet Union, Franco's Spain, Hitler's Germany, the other axis powers and puppet states, the Chinese collaborationist government and Thailand. The chronology of recognition of Manchukuo is as follows: Empire of Japan, 1932; El Salvador and Dominican Republic, 1934; Soviet Union, 1935; Italy and Spain, 1937; Germany, 1938; Hungary, 1939; Romania, Slovakia and 'New' China (Wang Jingwei Government), 1940; Bulgaria, Croatia, Finland, Vichy France and Thailand, 1941. (Ian Hill Nish, *Japanese Foreign Policy in the Interwar Period*, Westport (Connecticut), Greenwood Publishing Group, 2002, pp. 93-100).

ecclesiastical and local authorities occurred.<sup>20</sup> The Holy See then decided to take action to protect its missionaries and the flock: in March 1934 the Congregation of Propaganda Fide<sup>21</sup> appointed the Apostolic Vicar of Kirin, Monsignor Auguste Gaspais, as *Representative ad tempus of the Holy See and of the Catholic missions of Manchukuo to the government of Manchukuo*. Such a title, unprecedented in ecclesiastical law, was invented *ad hoc*. The reason for this choice emerges from a memorandum by Charles Lemaire, who in those years was the rector of the seminary of Kirin and was subsequently nominated auxiliary bishop of that diocese.<sup>22</sup> The document, written in 1986 and until recently unpublished, casts light on the intentions of the Holy See and the diplomatic tactics it adopted.

According to Lemaire, Rome “wanted to have someone who represented it among the Churches and to the government. But it also wanted, and very firmly, to abstain from recognizing the legitimacy of the government of Manchuria; it didn’t want to perform any act, not even one, that might appear as an ‘implicit legitimization’.”<sup>23</sup>

The fact that Gaspais had not been nominated by the Pope or the Secretary of State but by the Congregation of Propaganda Fide, a merely religious body having

---

<sup>20</sup> The Japanese-controlled government used its police system to prevent contacts between the ordinaries of these ecclesiastical districts and the apostolic delegate in China. Moreover, the new regime threatened to close Catholic schools that did not render the homage due to Confucius. (Gianni Valente, “Vatican-Manchukuo, *Mea Culpas* are not Necessary”, *30Days*, October 2005, <http://www.30giorni.it/us/articolo.asp?id=9611>. Accessed 13 January 2007).

<sup>21</sup> The Bull *Inscrutabili Divinae* (June 22, 1622), issued by Pope Gregory XV, marked the beginning of the constitutive period of the Congregation with the name of Propaganda Fide. The task of the Congregation has always been the propagation of the Faith throughout the world with the specific duty of coordinating all the missionary workers, issue guidelines for missionary activity, promote the formation of local clergy and hierarchy, encourage the founding of new missionary institutes and lastly provide material aid for missionary activities. The new Congregation became in this way the normal and exclusive instrument for the Holy Father and the Holy See for the exercise of jurisdiction over mission territories and missionary cooperation. In 1988, the name of the Congregation was changed into ‘Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples.’ (*Fides*, “The history of the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples”, <http://www.fides.org/eng/congregazione/storia.html>. Accessed 22 March 2007).

<sup>22</sup> Giovanni Coco, *Santa Sede e Mancukuo (1932-1945)*, Città’ del Vaticano, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2006.

<sup>23</sup> Charles Lemaire as quoted in: Gianni Valente, “Vatican-Manchukuo, *Mea Culpas* are not Necessary”.

authority over the missions, combined with the attribution of new functions to an ecclesiastic already *in situ*, was meant to signify that the Holy See wanted to “be represented but without recognizing the legitimacy of the government.”<sup>24</sup> However, the appointment of Monsignor Gaspais unavoidably involved the *de facto* recognition of the puppet state, and the Church’s subtle employment of symbolic and lexical *escamotages* did not prevent the Japanese from taking advantage of the situation. Even if Tokyo never formally declared that the Holy See had bestowed recognition on the government of Manchukuo, it skilfully acted in such a manner to make it appear so.<sup>25</sup> The artful but compromising Papal diplomacy in Manchuria was destined to have long-term repercussions on the Holy See relations with the PRC. The Holy See was in fact depicted by Maoist propaganda as an accomplice of the Japanese occupiers and the Catholic Church as an agency of foreign imperialism. Through the decades, the Manchukuo affair has been presented as proof of the Roman Catholic Church’s supposed malevolence toward the Chinese nation and used by Beijing as a justification for its mistrust and hostility towards the Holy See and the Chinese Catholics loyal to the Pope.<sup>26</sup>

The fact that the Catholic Church was diplomatically entangled with the Japanese in Manchuria did not prevent the Chinese Nationalist government from establishing diplomatic relations with the Holy See. In fact, in March 1942 the Chinese mission

---

<sup>24</sup> Ibidem

<sup>25</sup> For example, Gaspais was repeatedly invited to official receptions along with the Axis ambassadors. The regime propaganda organized triumphant welcomes for him during its pastoral visits, with children who waved little yellow and white Vatican flags, as if he were a fully ratified nuncio. The Japanese also covered him with honours, including the medal of Grand Official of the Order of National Support. (Giovanni Coco, *Santa Sede e Manciukuò (1932-1945)*).

<sup>26</sup> “They [Catholic missionaries] obstructed and opposed China’s struggle against fascism and the Chinese people’s revolution. After Japan invaded Northeast China the Vatican took a stand which was, in fact, supporting the Japanese aggression. It took the lead in recognizing the puppet Manchukuo regime set up by the Japanese and sent a representative there.” (State Administration for Religious Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, *Freedom of Religious Belief*, 16 October 1997, <http://www.sara.gov.cn/GB/zgzj/index.html>. Accessed 19 February 2007).

to the United States expressed the desire to establish formal relations with the Holy See and in June “the Apostolic Delegate in Washington D.C. gave, upon instructions, a positive response to the Chinese Embassy.”<sup>27</sup> On 23 October 1942, *L'Osservatore Romano*<sup>28</sup> published a note stating that the Holy See had shown its approval of the nomination of Dr. Hsieh Shou-Kang, Chargé d’Affaires of China in Switzerland, as Extraordinary Envoy and Plenipotentiary Minister. Dr. Hsieh, a scholar turned diplomat, presented his credentials to Pope Pius XII on February 25, 1943. The previous year Japan had also established diplomatic relations with the Holy See. In 1946, the Apostolic Delegation to China became an Apostolic Internunciature and the Pope sent Archbishop Antonio Riberi to Nanking, where the Nationalists had just relocated their central government, as the first Apostolic Internuncio.<sup>29</sup> A Church hierarchy was also formally established in China in 1946 with twenty metropolitan archiepiscopal sees and seventy-nine bishops’ sees:<sup>30</sup> three (the most important) of the metropolitan provinces were headed by native archbishops, the others by foreign clerics.<sup>31</sup> The same year the civil war between Nationalists and Communists resumed with great ferocity, with the latter winning decisive victories over their opponents. Despite the war, Monsignor Riberi remained at his post, albeit the rest of the foreign diplomatic corps had left with the Nationalist government, even after the proclamation of the People’s Republic of

---

<sup>27</sup> Apostolic Nunciature to China, *In Celebration of the 60 Years of ROC/Holy See Diplomatic Relations*, Taipei, 2002, p.1.

<sup>28</sup> *L'Osservatore Romano* (*The Roman Observer*) is the ‘semi-official’ daily newspaper of the Holy See. It covers all the Pontifical public activities, publishes editorials by prominent ecclesiastics, and runs the Curia’s official documents after being released.

<sup>29</sup> ‘Internuncio’ is the title that was given to Papal diplomatic representatives of second class, corresponding to that of Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary for diplomatic representatives of states. An internunciature corresponds, in civil diplomacy, to a legation. (Institute of Catholic History of Fu Jen Catholic University, *A Collection of Documents on the History of the 60 Years of Sino-Vatican Diplomatic Relations*, pp. 211-212).

<sup>30</sup> Additionally, there were thirty-eight Apostolic prefectures not included in the above hierarchy. (Apostolic Nunciature to China, *In Celebration of the 60 Years of ROC/Holy See Diplomatic Relations*, p. 2).

<sup>31</sup> Terrence J. Boyle, “Christianity in China between the Establishment of the Native Hierarchy in 1926 and the Communist Conquest of the Mainland in 1949”, *Catholicism*, 15 October 2007, [http://www.tboyle.net/Catholicism/China\\_Hist\\_II.html](http://www.tboyle.net/Catholicism/China_Hist_II.html). Accessed 2 March 2007).

China in October 1949. By then there were 139 archbishops and bishops on the mainland of China, of whom twenty-six were ethnic Chinese and 113 were foreigners.<sup>32</sup> Riberi had stayed behind in order to continue his pastoral duties but, in September 1951, the PRC authorities decreed his expulsion after he issued a pastoral letter to urge the Chinese clergymen not to participate in the government-sanctioned 'Three Autonomies Movement' - self-government,<sup>33</sup> self-support and self-propagation - fostered by the Maoist regime in the administration of Church affairs.<sup>34</sup> The Internuncio travelled by train from Shanghai to Canton and then on to Hong Kong, where he stayed for one year. In November 1952, Riberi had to leave the British colony and move to Taiwan, where the Nationalist government had fled and reorganized its ranks.<sup>35</sup> The Apostolic Nunciature to China was then relocated to the island and Taiwan was subsequently named as the twenty-first Chinese ecclesiastical province.<sup>36</sup> Like the Internuncio, in the early 1950s most missionaries left or were expelled from China.<sup>37</sup> The new government in fact, rather than targeting the ethnic Chinese clergy, initially directed its efforts towards arresting and expelling foreign missionaries.<sup>38</sup> Usually, the missionaries relocated to Hong

---

<sup>32</sup> Ibidem

<sup>33</sup> *Id est*, "ridding itself of any form of hierarchical subjection to foreign authority" (Gianni Valente, "The long road and "accidents along the way", *30Days*, January 2007, [http://www.30giorni.it/us/articolo\\_stampato.asp?id=12905](http://www.30giorni.it/us/articolo_stampato.asp?id=12905). Accessed 20 February 2007).

<sup>34</sup> "The People's Republic authorities accused him of colluding with colonialism and imperialism in exploiting the Chinese". (Gerald Chan, "Sino-Vatican Diplomatic Relations: Problems and Prospects", p. 816). According to the Chinese authorities, "after the victory in the War of Resistance Against Japan some Western missionaries stirred up hostility against the people's revolution among the converts and even organized armed forces to help the Kuomintang fight in the civil war." (State Administration for Religious Affairs of the People's Republic of China, *Freedom of Religious Belief*).

<sup>35</sup> Institute of Catholic History of Fu Jen Catholic University, *A Collection of Documents on the History of the 60 Years of Sino-Vatican Diplomatic Relations*.

<sup>36</sup> Apostolic Nunciature to China, *In Celebration of the 60 Years of ROC/Holy See Diplomatic Relations*, p. 2.

<sup>37</sup> According to the Chinese, "they [Catholic missionaries] adopted a hostile attitude toward New China and plotted sabotage." (State Administration for Religious Affairs of the People's Republic of China, *Freedom of Religious Belief*).

<sup>38</sup> "Between the end of 1949 and the first months of 1952, the Vatican was even able to increase the number of dioceses on the mainland of China from 139 to 144, and to name, and have consecrated, 18 (some say 22) additional bishops, all but one of them ethnic Chinese." (Terrence J. Boyle,

Kong or Taiwan. The 'ethnic cleansing' of the clergy represented the first hard blow against the Chinese Church because it was deprived of the majority of its bishops. In 1955, the government started a large scale persecution of ethnic Chinese Catholics: numerous bishops, priests and nuns were arrested and imprisoned, many of them were condemned to forced labour. As a result, large sectors of the Chinese Church went underground.<sup>39</sup>

While the repression was carried out, amongst the Protestant denominations some groups began promoting the organization of ecclesial activities on the basis of the above mentioned principles of self-administration, self-support and self-propagation. The theses of the so called Three Autonomies Movement were upheld also by a small but vocal circle of Catholic clergymen and lay people. The Chinese government decided to actively support the Movement, considering it an "opportunity to establish national Churches independent from the West but firmly under its control,"<sup>40</sup> and in 1954 it favoured the establishment of a Protestant 'patriotic' organization, the Three-Self Patriotic Movement. Three years later, in June 1957, an analogue organization, the Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association (CPCA<sup>41</sup>), was instituted at a gathering of 241 Catholics - allegedly including ten bishops and over 200 priests - and government representatives convened in Beijing.<sup>42</sup>

---

*Christianity in China between the Establishment of the Native Hierarchy in 1926 and the Communist Conquest of the Mainland in 1949*).

<sup>39</sup> Abigail Cutler, "A Church for China", *The Atlantic*, 5 June 2007, <http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200706u/catholic-china>. Accessed 16 June 2007.

<sup>40</sup> Confidential source sighted by Professor Richard Herr.

<sup>41</sup> *Repetita iuvant*.

<sup>42</sup> Terrence J. Boyle, *Christianity in China between the Establishment of the Native Hierarchy in 1926 and the Communist Conquest of the Mainland in 1949*.

In order to prove its patriotism and autonomy from the Apostolic See, the assembly issued a resolution in which the religious authority of the Pope was (nominally) affirmed, but not his right “to give orders which had a counterrevolutionary purpose.”<sup>43</sup> The Pope, then, was to be (nominally) obeyed only in matters pertaining to faith and Church law. The CPCA soon became a division of the Religious Affairs Bureau (RAB)<sup>44</sup> and the only organizational body of Catholics officially recognized by the government. The Catholic clergymen and nuns who rejected the CPCA were persecuted and imprisoned. As a result, by late 1957, 120 out of 144 dioceses and prefectures were without ordinaries.<sup>45</sup> The institution of the CPCA and the persecution of its opponents marked the separation between those Chinese Catholics who had chosen to come to terms with the Communist government and to be under the Party’s control, but legal, and those who had decided not to compromise with the regime and, at the cost of religious oppression, to remain loyal to the Pope and operate clandestinely. The two groups are, simplistically and misleadingly, often identified as ‘open’ (or ‘official’) Church and ‘underground’ (or ‘clandestine’) Church.<sup>46</sup>

---

<sup>43</sup> John A. Cioppa, “Preface”, in Elmer Wurth and Betty Ann Maheu, *Papal Documents Related to China (1937-2005)*, Holy Spirit Study Centre, Hong Kong, 2006, p. XVI.

<sup>44</sup> The RAB was established in 1954, when also the State Council was founded. Since then, the RAB - tasked with supervising religious affairs and issues - had been running under the State Council. In March 1998, the State Council renamed the RAB into the State Administration for Religious Affairs. (GOV.cn, “State Administration for Religious Affairs”, 2006, [http://english.gov.cn/2005-10/09/content\\_75331.htm](http://english.gov.cn/2005-10/09/content_75331.htm). Accessed 13 March 2007).

<sup>45</sup> Terrence J. Boyle, *Christianity in China between the Establishment of the Native Hierarchy in 1926 and the Communist Conquest of the Mainland in 1949*.

<sup>46</sup> “In the face of this situation, there arises the spontaneous question of what ‘the Roman Church’ means in China. Outside the country, there has long been a widespread impression that the Catholic Church is divided in China. According to this image, there was the official Church, dominated politically by the Patriotic Association, with its bishops appointed by the Chinese government and exercising their office without the approval of the Holy See: this was called, in a reductionist and mistaken manner, ‘the patriotic Church.’ Next to this was a community not recognized by the government and thus strictly overseen and persecuted, with bishops appointed by the Holy See, without the government’s recognition: this was called ‘the clandestine Church.’” (Hans Waldenfels, “La Cina sta aprendo: Impressioni di un viaggio”, *La Civiltà Cattolica*, Vol. 4, No. 3278, 15 October 2005, p. 190).

### *1950s-1990s: from Confrontation to Signs of an Opening*

The Holy See responded to the attempt to nationalize the Chinese Church with three encyclical letters from Pius XII.<sup>47</sup> The first encyclical, entitled *Cupimus Imprimis*, was addressed “to the Bishops, Clergy and People of China.”<sup>48</sup> The second document, referred to as *Ad Sinarum Gentes*, was written in October 1954 and sent, like the previous encyclical, to “the Bishops, Clergy and People of China.”<sup>49</sup> The third letter, known as *Ad Apostolorum Principis*, was issued in July 1958 - in the aftermath of the institution of the CPCA - and was addressed only to “the Archbishops, Bishops, other Local Ordinaries, and Clergy and People of China in Peace and Communion with the Apostolic See [italics is mine].”<sup>50</sup> The last encyclical was preceded by Pius XII’s *Prayer for the Church of Silence* which was issued in July 1957, at precisely the same time that the CPCA was officially established.<sup>51</sup> Besides consoling Chinese Catholics in a time of persecution, in the first encyclical Pius XII already condemns the idea of setting up particular national churches as a threat to the unity established by Christ. However, the Pope expressed his desire to see the Church in China grow and flourish to the point of becoming truly Chinese with no need of outside help. For this very reason - the Pope maintained - he had created the first Chinese cardinal, Thomas Tien. The

---

<sup>47</sup> The Papal encyclicals are in the strictest sense, letters sent by the Pope to the bishops of the Catholic Church as a whole or to those in one country, usually treating some aspect of Catholic doctrine. However, the form of the address can vary widely, and often designates a wider audience. The title of an encyclical is usually taken from its first few words (Australian Catholic University, *Glossary*, <http://dlibrary.acu.edu.au/research/theology/theo305/glossary.htm>. Accessed 1 March 2007).

<sup>48</sup> Institute of Catholic History of Fu Jen Catholic University, *A Collection of Documents on the History of the 60 Years of Sino-Vatican Diplomatic Relations*, p. 3.

<sup>49</sup> Pius XII, encyclical letter *Ad Sinarum Gentes*, in Institute of Catholic History of Fu Jen Catholic University, *A Collection of Documents on the History of the 60 Years of Sino-Vatican Diplomatic Relations*, p. 11.

<sup>50</sup> Pius XII, encyclical letter *Ad Apostolorum Principis*, in Elmer Wurth and Betty Ann Maheu, *Papal Documents Related to China (1937-2005)*, Holy Spirit Study Centre, Hong Kong, 2006, p. 77.

<sup>51</sup> There is no specific mention of China in this prayer, but the timing of it evidences that the Pope was referring his words to China in particular.



Roman Pontiff also insisted that good Chinese Christians are also good Chinese citizens. While the tone of this first encyclical is consolatory, that of *Ad Sinarum Gentes* is more critical of the government's interference in the practice of religion. Although not rejecting the principles of self-direction, self-support and self-propagation, the encyclical reaffirmed that they should be pursued only in union with the Apostolic See in doctrine and jurisdiction because every Catholic community has the obligation to remain faithful to the Pope. Therefore, the Holy See cannot accept the Chinese version of the 'Three Autonomies' because they are aimed at separating the Chinese flock from Rome. The document stressed that, because of their refusal of the universality of the Church, the members of a 'patriotic association' could not claim to be Catholic.<sup>52</sup>

The publication of the third encyclical was preceded by a theological-diplomatic incident that generated an issue destined to become one of the main obstacles to the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Holy See and Beijing. On 24 March 1958 a telegram from Hankou (Hebei Province) was received in the Vatican. It informed Rome that Father Bernardine Dong had been elected bishop at a meeting of the local clergy and that he was to be consecrated soon. A second telegram followed two days later reporting the election of Father Mark Yuan as the Bishop of Wuchang. Both the telegrams asked for the approval of the Holy See. The Congregation of Propaganda Fide, as the competent body, replied declaring the elections void, since only the Roman Pontiff can appoint bishops, and reminded the two priests of the decree issued by the Congregation of the Holy Office on 9 April 1951. The decree stated that the bishop performing episcopal consecration on a

---

<sup>52</sup> Pius XII, encyclical letter *Ad Sinarum Gentes*, in Institute of Catholic History of Fu Jen Catholic University, *A Collection of Documents on the History of the 60 Years of Sino-Vatican Diplomatic Relations*, pp. 11-22.

priest “who has not been nominated by the Holy See, or expressly confirmed by the same,”<sup>53</sup> as well as the clergyman receiving the consecration, “are subject *ipso facto* to excommunication *specialissimo modo* reserved to the Holy See.”<sup>54</sup> In spite of Rome’s warnings, the consecrations of the two ‘patriotic’ bishops were held. Between April 20 and July 20 of 1958, thirteen more Chinese priests were consecrated bishops for six Chinese dioceses. All lacked the Papal mandate.<sup>55</sup> The Pope’s deep sadness and disappointment over the elections and consecrations held outside the tradition and discipline of the Church were voiced in the *Ad Apostolorum Principis*. In this encyclical Pius XII reminded the faithful that, in order to be legitimate pastors, the bishops had to be “in Peace and Communion with the Apostolic See”<sup>56</sup> and that to separate oneself from the “one flock under the one supreme shepherd”<sup>57</sup> is to lose one’s faith and salvation. In addition, the Pope reaffirmed that, while the Chinese Catholics were patriotic, the CPCA was preaching false doctrine disguised as false patriotism. The Pontiff also rejected the argument that the ‘patriotic’ episcopal consecrations were needed to fill the vacant sees, since their vacancy was due to the imprisonment of legitimate bishops.<sup>58</sup>

The affirmations of Pius XII resonate with a letter to the Catholic Hierarchy in Taiwan written in 1961 by his successor, John XXIII. In his message, the Pope stated that all bishops must not only follow the Roman Pontiff in doctrine but also

---

<sup>53</sup> Elmer Wurth and Betty Ann Maheu, *Papal Documents Related to China (1937-2005)*, p. 92.

<sup>54</sup> Ibidem. However, the Holy See never imposed the excommunications on the two bishops.

<sup>55</sup> In the following four years, an additional 36 ‘patriotic’ bishops were consecrated. (Terrence J. Boyle, *Christianity in China between the Establishment of the Native Hierarchy in 1926 and the Communist Conquest of the Mainland in 1949*).

<sup>56</sup> Pius XII, encyclical letter *Ad Apostolorum Principis*, in Elmer Wurth and Betty Ann Maheu, *Papal Documents Related to China (1937-2005)*, p. 93.

<sup>57</sup> Ibidem, p. 94.

<sup>58</sup> This is how the aforementioned *White Paper on Religious Freedom* comments on Pius XII’s three encyclicals: “After the founding of New China in 1949 the Vatican issued papal encyclicals several times instigating hatred against the new people’s political power among the converts.” (State Administration for Religious Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, *Freedom of Religious Belief*).

depend on him for their power of jurisdiction, and highlighted that the Chinese are attracted to the Church because it is not foreign to any culture or people.<sup>59</sup> In the letter, John XXIII also opened a window for reconciliation with the ‘patriotic’ clergy by praying that divine grace will touch the consciences of those in error. The following year, the Pope reportedly made another step by promising not to use the term ‘schism’<sup>60</sup> again when speaking of the Church in China.<sup>61</sup> In 1963, after his election to pontificate, Paul VI sent a short message to Chinese leaders, ending with a reassurance that “the Church does not want to dominate, but to serve.”<sup>62</sup> In 1964, the Pope advocated for dialogue in the encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam* and, on New Year’s Eve of 1965, sent a conciliatory telegram to Chairman Mao who, predictably, did not reply. In 1966, due also to “the insistence on the part of the political and religious authorities of Taiwan,”<sup>63</sup> the Apostolic Internunciature in Taipei was raised to the level of Nunciature<sup>64</sup> and Riberi’s successor as Internuncio,

---

<sup>59</sup> John XXIII, “Letter to the Hierarchy in Formosa”, 29 June 1961, in Elmer Wurth and Betty Ann Maheu, *Papal Documents Related to China (1937-2005)* pp. 131-135.

<sup>60</sup> A schism is a major split within a religious denomination, usually caused by differences in belief or practice, leading to the constitution of a separate breakaway organization, or the offence of causing such a division. Within the Catholic Church, a schism is “the refusal of submission to the Roman Pontiff or of communion with the members of the Church subject to him.” (Holy See, *Code of Canon Law*, Can. 751).

<sup>61</sup> In 1959, at a meeting in Hong Kong attended by experts on China and presided by Cardinal Agagianian, Prefect of Propaganda Fide, it was agreed that the new consecrations were valid but illicit, and that the Church in China was most likely not a schism. In November 1962, during the first session of the Second Vatican Council, a group of bishops who had lived in China arrived at the same conclusion and reported their opinion to the Pope who, according to them, promise to thenceforth refrain from using the word ‘schism’. (Elmer Wurth and Betty Ann Maheu, *Papal Documents Related to China (1937-2005)*, p. 137-138). John XXIII’s decision proved crucial for the Church in China, providing the basis for the future reunification of the Chinese Catholics. In fact, while Rome’s denunciation of the ‘patriotic’ Church as schismatic would had been very much in the interest of the Chinese government, the choice of considering the Church in China as one - although divided in two segments - laid the foundations of the rapprochement between the Holy See and the ‘official’ bishops four decades later. (Magda Hornemann, “China’s Catholics, the Holy See and religious freedom”, *Forum 18 News Service*, 12 April 2007, [http://www.forum18.org/Archive.php?article\\_id=942](http://www.forum18.org/Archive.php?article_id=942). Accessed 6 May 2007).

<sup>62</sup> Paul VI, “Message to the Chinese Leaders”, in Institute of Catholic History of Fu Jen Catholic University, *A Collection of Documents on the History of the 60 Years of Sino-Vatican Diplomatic Relations*, p. 92.

<sup>63</sup> Institute of Catholic History of Fu Jen Catholic University, *A Collection of Documents on the History of the 60 Years of Sino-Vatican Diplomatic Relations*, p. 210.

<sup>64</sup> Apostolic Nunciature to China, *In Celebration of the 60 Years of ROC/Holy See Diplomatic Relations*, p. 1.

Archbishop Giuseppe Caprio, was elevated to the rank of Pronuncio.<sup>65</sup> Seven years earlier, the Chinese Nationalist government had raised its mission to the Holy See to ambassadorial status.<sup>66</sup> According to China analyst Gerald Chan, the delayed reciprocation by the Holy See reveals its intention to buy time in the hope of starting negotiations with Beijing.<sup>67</sup>

However, the hopes and the expectations nourished in the Vatican palaces were frustrated by the onset of the Cultural Revolution in 1966. During that period of violent purges and iconoclastic zeal all public religious activities ceased and all the properties of the Catholic Church were confiscated. The places of worship that were not destroyed or badly damaged were adapted as warehouses or factories. The Red Guards systematically resorted to physical and psychological violence to force believers to abandon their faith. The CPCA itself was suspended. Many religious leaders had to endure public humiliation sessions and were incarcerated or interned in labour camps.<sup>68</sup> Some bishops and priests even got married to conform to government regulations.<sup>69</sup> Public liturgies did not resume until 1971 when two churches reopened in Beijing for the benefit of foreign Protestant and Catholic students and diplomats.<sup>70</sup>

---

<sup>65</sup> Pronuncio was a term used from 1965 to 1991 to identify a Papal diplomatic representative of full ambassadorial rank accredited to a state that did not accord him precedence over other ambassadors and *de iure* deanship of the diplomatic corps, as envisaged in the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. In those states, the Papal representative becomes dean only as the senior member of the corps.

<sup>66</sup> Gerald Chan, "Sino-Vatican Diplomatic Relations: Problems and Prospects", p. 816.

<sup>67</sup> Ibidem

<sup>68</sup> Jean-Paul Wiest, *Understanding the Roman Catholic Church in China*, paper presentation, The French Centre For Research on Contemporary China, Hong Kong (PRC), 20 June 2002, [www.usccb.net/church-updates/UnderstandingRCCinChina.pdf](http://www.usccb.net/church-updates/UnderstandingRCCinChina.pdf). Accessed 2 March 2007.

<sup>69</sup> Actually, many of these marriages seemed to have been in name only given that often the brides were nuns who otherwise would have had no other means of support (Jean-Paul Wiest, *Understanding the Roman Catholic Church in China*).

<sup>70</sup> Zenit, "The Catholic Church in China", <http://www.zenit.org/english/asia/stats2.html>. Accessed 27 January 2007.

Although the Cultural Revolution was raging, Papal diplomacy continued its efforts to woo the Maoist government, even lending its voice to the PRC's admission to the United Nations some time before Beijing's membership was agreed.<sup>71</sup> In October 1971, on the eve of Communist China's *entrée* into the United Nations, across the Tiber it was decided to recall the then Pronuncio in Taiwan, Archbishop Edward I. Cassidy, for an extended leave. Cassidy, while retaining his official title of Pronuncio to China, was also nominated Pronuncio to Bangladesh, with permanent residence in Dhaka.<sup>72</sup> Business at the nunciature in Taipei was devolved to Monsignor Francesco Colasuonno, a Chargé d'Affaires ad interim with the title of Counsellor.<sup>73</sup> Since then, the post of (Pro)Nuncio to China has been vacant, and the nunciature has been looked after by a Chargé d'Affaires ad interim.<sup>74</sup> The Holy See's decision to downgrade its diplomatic representation in Taiwan was the result of a combination of factors, including the Pope's desire to resume contacts with the Chinese Church, the increasing international recognition of the Maoist government, and Beijing's new Westpolitik. Rome's initiative, according to renowned Jesuit Sinologist, Laszlo Ladany, was counterproductive in two ways: first, because it failed to win the favour of Beijing; second, because it gravely disappointed Taipei.<sup>75</sup>

---

<sup>71</sup> Eric Clark, *Corps Diplomatique*, pp. 239-240.

<sup>72</sup> Gerald Chan, "Sino-Vatican Diplomatic Relations: Problems and Prospects", p. 817.

<sup>73</sup> Salvador Miranda, *The Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, Biographical Dictionary (1903-2005)*, Miami, Florida International University, 2006, <http://www.fiu.edu/~mirandas/bios-c.htm>. Accessed 3 March 2007.

<sup>74</sup> Apostolic Nunciature to China, *In Celebration of the 60 Years of ROC/Holy See Diplomatic Relations*, p. 1. The current Chargé d'Affaires ad interim is Monsignor Paul Fitzpatrick Russell who, in May 2008, has been assigned to the nunciature in Taipei. He replaced Monsignor Ambrose Madtha, who has been appointed Apostolic Nuncio to the Ivory Coast. (Sandro Magister, "Dalla nunziatura di Taiwan se ne va l'ultimo. Ma non spegne la luce", *Settimo Cielo*, 8 May 2008, <http://magister.blogautore.espresso.repubblica.it/2008/05/08/dalla-nunziatura-di-taiwan-se-ne-va-lultimo-e-spegne-la-luce/>. Accessed 8 May 2008).

<sup>75</sup> Laszlo Ladany, "Kan Zhongguo dalu tianzhujiaohui" ("A Look at the Catholic Church on the Chinese Mainland"), *Baixing (Common People)*, No. 71, May 1984, p. 35.

In 1976 the fury of the Cultural Revolution eventually died down. Numerous bishops, priests and nuns were released and cautiously resumed their activities while the ban on religious belief and practice was relaxed.<sup>76</sup> In 1978, the more tolerant approach towards religion taken by new leader Deng Xiaoping resulted in the reappearance of representatives from the five officially recognized religions - Buddhism, Taoism, Catholicism, Protestantism, and Islam - at the meeting of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.<sup>77</sup> This body has no decisional power but a role in political consultation among the constituencies of the delegates, the Communist Party and the government. In 1979, also the CPCA resurfaced and, in 1980, it was flanked by two new organizations: the Chinese Catholic Church Administrative Commission and the Chinese Catholic Bishops' Conference,<sup>78</sup> both under the tutelage of the government. In the same year the China Christian Council, a 'post-denominational' Protestant (and patriotic) church, was established.<sup>79</sup> In 1982, the PRC's new constitution - in Article 36 - recognized the freedom of

---

<sup>76</sup> Bernardo Cervellera, *Missione Cina*, p. 158.

<sup>77</sup> The Conference was established on September 1949 and served as the *de facto* legislature of the PRC until the Constitution of 1954, when this function was transferred to the National People's Congress. Since then, it has not been formally included in the PRC Constitution. However, its role and powers are somewhat analogous to an advisory legislative upper house. As stated in the official website of the Conference, among the organizations or interest groups represented in its National Committee there is the 'world of religion', that is the five religions approved by the government. (The Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, "Brief History of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference", [http://www.cppcc.gov.cn/English/brf\\_intro](http://www.cppcc.gov.cn/English/brf_intro). Accessed 19 February 2007).

<sup>78</sup> The former is made up of clergymen and lay people and is responsible for the internal, pastoral affairs of the church. The latter, as the name suggests, consists of patriotic Chinese bishops. Its main function is to decide on matters concerning theology and church doctrine and teaching, and it is responsible for external affairs. Since the institution of these additional bodies, the CPCA has nominally relegated itself to look after external affairs and church-state relations. However, according to state directives, these structures - like all patriotic religious organizations - "must follow the Party's and the government's leadership". Therefore, these bodies are not the final reference points in pastoral and ecclesial affairs, which continue to be overseen by the government. (Angelo Lazzarotto, "Progress in Religious Freedom in China?", *Tripod*, Vol. 22, No. 124, Spring 2002, [www.hsstudyc.org.hk/trip4-2.htm](http://www.hsstudyc.org.hk/trip4-2.htm). Accessed 16 February 2007).

<sup>79</sup> Chinese Protestant Church, "A brief account of Christianity in China", *Chinese Protestant Church*, 2003, <http://www.chineseprotestantchurch.org.cn/en/about/abrief.htm>. Accessed 2 March 2007.

religious belief more fully than the preceding constitutional charter.<sup>80</sup> The last paragraph of the article, though, emphasized that “Religious bodies and religious affairs are not subject to any foreign domination.”<sup>81</sup> That year, the Central Committee of the Communist Party issued a comprehensive policy document on the religious question, known as *Document No. 19*.<sup>82</sup> Between its lines, the independent variable of the Chinese religious policy’s equation emerges: “to put religion into an orbit set by the Party as well as not to allow religion to spread.”<sup>83</sup> Therefore, despite the partial overtures of the government, many Catholic communities continued to stay underground, deeming that the regime had only covered up old aims with new enticements.

With the election of Pope John Paul II in 1978, a new era opened also for the Catholic Church, including the Church in China. In 1981, Joseph Fan Xueyan, a bishop loyal to Rome, consecrated three new bishops outside the control of the CPCA, but without having received any mandate from the Apostolic See. The Holy See took a pragmatic approach, and indirectly approved the initiative of Fan Xueyan, by granting very special faculties to the loyalist Chinese bishops including that of “choosing and ordaining their own coadjutor bishops”<sup>84</sup> or the bishops of their neighbouring dioceses that remained without pastors. In case of difficulty of

---

<sup>80</sup> The term “religious freedom” has been explicitly written into all four Chinese constitutions; in 1954, 1975, 1978 and 1982. (Beatrice Leung, “Religious Freedom and the Constitution in the People’s Republic of China: Interpretation and Implementation”, *Diskus*, Vol. 10, No. 1, March 1995, p. 1).

<sup>81</sup> People’s Republic of China, *Constitution of the People’s Republic of China*, 4 December 1982, Article 36, <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/constitution/constitution.html>. Accessed 9 April 2007. The provisions of Article 36 were retained in the constitutional amendments of 1988, 1993 and 1999.

<sup>82</sup> Document No. 19, dated 31 March 1982, dealt with “the basic policy and standpoint our country should have on the religious question during this period of socialism.” (Document No. 19 as quoted in Angelo Lazzarotto, “Progress in Religious Freedom in China?”).

<sup>83</sup> Beatrice Leung, “Religious Freedom and the Constitution in the People’s Republic of China: Interpretation and Implementation”, pp. 7-8.

<sup>84</sup> Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, *Document 5442/81*, 12 December 1981, as quoted in Gianni Valente, “The long road and ‘accidents along the way’”.

communication or urgency, such ordinations may be held without informing the Holy See beforehand.<sup>85</sup> Pope John Paul II wanted to enable the segment of the Chinese Church loyal to the Apostolic See, exsanguinated by the persecutions of the Cultural Revolution, to recover and reorganize.<sup>86</sup> At the same time, the Holy See signalled that it was ready to concede autonomy as a reward for fidelity. As expert on the Church in China, Gianni Valente, highlights, only from this Holy See's special concession it is "possible to speak of the beginning and of the rapid spread over China of a 'clandestine' ecclesial structure with canonical approval."<sup>87</sup> In the same period, some prominent ecclesiastics - first of all Cardinal Roger Etchegaray<sup>88</sup> - as well as simple priests started visiting China and their presence in the country provided an increasing number of 'patriotic' bishops with the opportunity to send messages to the Apostolic See in which they declared themselves, in their hearts, in full communion with the Pope and asked to be recognized as legitimate bishops by obtaining the canonical *sanatio*. Albeit, initially, the Chinese authorities were generally unaware of the rapprochement between the 'official' bishops and Rome, the mere existence of a Church structure outside governmental control was sufficient for them to decide on a new crackdown against the 'underground' Catholics.<sup>89</sup>

---

<sup>85</sup> Gianni Valente, "The long road and 'accidents along the way'".

<sup>86</sup> The Pope, so as not to leave the "martyred Christianity" of China "further deprived of legitimate pastors", and "in the impossibility in which the Holy See finds itself of providing directly", has decided to authorize "the legitimate bishops loyal to the Holy See" to "take the initiatives they retain necessary for the spiritual good of Catholics", for "the entire Church that lives in the same Republic". (*Document 5442/81*, 12 December 1981, as quoted in Gianni Valente, "The long road and 'accidents along the way'").

<sup>87</sup> Gianni Valente, "The long road and 'accidents along the way'".

<sup>88</sup> See Roger Etchegaray, *Verso i cristiani in Cina. Visti da una rana dal fondo di un pozzo*, Milano, Mondadori, 2005.

<sup>89</sup> Such a crackdown was already foreshadowed in the above-mentioned Document No. 19 which instigated to "harshly crush" the clandestine communities that "with the excuse of religion are carrying on harmful spying" (Document No. 19 as quoted in Gianni Valente, "The long road and 'accidents along the way'").



The Holy See, however, continued to pursue a dialogue with the PRC government. In 1981, Cardinal Casaroli, the then Secretary of State, made the first overture to China after he went to Hong Kong to greet Bishop Deng Yiming whose release, after twenty-two years in prison, had been decided by the Chinese as a sign of good will.<sup>90</sup> During his visit to the Philippines in February 1981, John Paul II sent another strong signal by making a very conciliatory speech towards China in order to make clear to Beijing his intention to conduct dialogue with China. After a temporary setback in 1982, caused by the unilateral Papal appointment of Deng Yiming as the Archbishop of Guangzhou, the informal contacts between Rome and the Chinese authorities continued and led to some significant progress.<sup>91</sup> In November 1987, Zhao Ziyang, the then Secretary General of the CPC, met Cardinal Sin of Manila in Beijing and they agreed to let their aides-de-campo define the modalities for initiating formal Holy See-China negotiations.<sup>92</sup> It seemed the meeting had opened the path to the establishment of formal relations between the Apostolic See and Beijing. Unfortunately, the negotiations soon bogged down on the issues of the appointment of bishops and the jurisdiction of the Catholic Church in China and the situation reverted to its previous state of diplomatic stalemate.<sup>93</sup>

From the mid-1980s the Holy See also began to prepare the conditions for mending the fracture between 'official' and 'underground' Catholics. In 1984 the names of all titular archbishops and bishops of dioceses in China held by foreign

---

<sup>90</sup> *Sunday Examiner*, "The Pope Speaks to Chinese Christians", 27 February 1981, [sundayex.catholic.org.hk](http://sundayex.catholic.org.hk). Accessed 1 March 2007).

<sup>91</sup> Beatrice Leung, "Sino-Vatican Relations at the Century's Turn", *Journal of Contemporary China*, Vol. 14, No. 43, May 2005, p. 354.

<sup>92</sup> One year earlier the then Secretary of State, Cardinal Casaroli, had openly acknowledged the existence of official contacts between the Holy See and Beijing (Gerald Chan, "Sino-Vatican Diplomatic Relations: Problems and Prospects", p. 825).

<sup>93</sup> Beatrice Leung, "Sino-Vatican Relations at the Century's Turn", pp. 354-356.

missionaries since the 1950s were deleted from the *Annuario Pontificio* (Pontifical Yearbook).<sup>94</sup> One year later, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith,<sup>95</sup> after severe scrutiny, confirmed the validity (but not the legitimacy) of the ordination of the patriotic bishops and the consequent validity of the sacrament administered by them.<sup>96</sup> When, in February 1989, some ‘underground’ bishops wrote to Rome about their intention to set up a regular Catholic Bishops’ Conference, the Holy See replied that - although understanding the reasons of the proposal - it considered it “not opportune to be implemented”<sup>97</sup> for the moment. Nonetheless, in November a group of leaders of clandestine communities gathered in a village in Shaanxi and established the ‘Chinese National Conference of Roman Catholic Bishops’.<sup>98</sup> The Holy See, very cautiously, refrained from publicly endorsing or disowning their initiative.<sup>99</sup> The Chinese government, however, took countermeasures against the vitality shown by the underground Catholics. For instance, the new 1992 statutes of the (patriotic) Bishops’ College mentioned the notorious “principles of freedom

<sup>94</sup> Gerald Chan, “Sino-Vatican Diplomatic Relations: Problems and Prospects”, p. 828.

<sup>95</sup> Founded in 1542 by Pope Paul III with the Constitution *Licet ab initio*, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith was originally called the Sacred Congregation of the Universal Inquisition as its duty was to defend the Church from heresy. It is the oldest of the Curia’s nine congregations. Pope St. Pius X in 1908 changed the name to the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office. It received its current name in 1965 with Pope Paul VI. Today, according to Article 48 of the Apostolic Constitution on the Roman Curia, *Pastor Bonus*, promulgated by the Holy Father John Paul II on June 28, 1988, “the duty proper to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith is to promote and safeguard the doctrine on the faith and morals throughout the Catholic world: for this reason everything which in any way touches such matter falls within its competence.” (Holy See, “Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith”, [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_pro\\_14071997\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_pro_14071997_en.html). Accessed 3 March 2007).

<sup>96</sup> Gianni Valente, “Elected ‘democratically’. Valid nevertheless”, *30Days*, May 2004, <http://www.30giorni.it/us/articolo.asp?id=3832>. Accessed 3 March 2008.

<sup>97</sup> Cardinal Jozef Tomko as quoted in Gianni Valente, “The long road and ‘accidents along the way’”. Cardinal Tomko has been the Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples from 1985 to 2001.

<sup>98</sup> “On the way back to their dioceses, all attendees of the Conference were arrested by the Chinese authority. Eventually, four bishops died in jail. Many were injured and became sick”, Joseph Kung, “Open Letter to the Vatican”, 28 March 2000, *Cardinal Kung Foundation*, <http://www.cardinalkungfoundation.org/cpa/openletter.html>. Accessed 3 March 2007.

<sup>99</sup> The Holy See recognizes the Episcopal conference of Taiwan as the ‘Chinese Regional Bishops’ Conference’. (Chinese Regional Bishops’ Conference, “Chinese Regional Bishops’ Conference”, <http://www.catholic.org.tw/catholic/index.php>. Accessed 6 March 2007).

and self-government that befits the Chinese situation.”<sup>100</sup> The PRC authorities’ moves only revealed their difficulties in controlling the official Catholic clergy and encouraged Rome to take further steps towards the integration of the two segments of the Chinese Church. In 1993, at a top-level meeting on China held in the Vatican, it was established that, from then on, in order to be considered legitimate every episcopal ordination would need the previous approval of the Apostolic See. The special faculties conceded in 1981, which had permitted the growth of the underground episcopal network, were not revoked but put aside.<sup>101</sup> At the same time, Rome requested the ‘patriotic’ bishops consecrated with the *placet* of the Holy See or subsequently regularized to “make the assent of the Holy See public, in the case of illegitimate episcopal ordinations, and the regularization of the situation of the person concerned, in the case of the legitimization of illegitimate bishops.”<sup>102</sup>

### *Conclusion*

The second half of the 1990s and the first lustrum of the new century have been characterized by the Holy See’s increasing - and sometimes unheard-of - efforts to start negotiations on diplomatic relations with Beijing and by Chinese oscillation between a positive response and abrupt involution. The events of the last decade are directly relevant to the issue of the possible developments of the Holy See-PRC relations and, therefore, will be investigated in the next chapter. Those events - as well as the decisions leading to them and their consequences - can be better

---

<sup>100</sup> Gianni Valente, “The long road and ‘accidents along the way’”.

<sup>101</sup> Ibidem

<sup>102</sup> Ibidem

understood and explained in the light of the previous history of the Sino-Pontifical interaction, as illustrated in this section. In particular, the knowledge of the historical development of the difficult relations between the Catholic Church and China will greatly assist understanding of some of the major issues and concepts that will recur throughout the following chapters and comprehension of the diplomatic and political stances adopted by the Holy See and Beijing.

### ***- Chapter III -***

#### ***The Late Pontificate of John Paul II and the Initiatives of Benedict***

##### ***XVI***

###### ***Introduction***

The opening of the new century has seen an unprecedented charm offensive of the Holy See towards China. In the last decade, the Pontifical diplomacy has engaged in intense activity aimed at persuading Beijing to sit at the negotiation table. At the same time, Rome has also successfully promoted the return of the patriotic segment of the Church in China under the crosier of the successor of Peter. The Chinese response to the Holy See's overtures has been characterized by partial openings followed by sudden reversions to the usual intransigence about state control over the institutional and the ecclesial life of the Church in China. Beijing has taken an ambivalent stance on its relations with the Apostolic See. On the one hand, the Chinese government has declared its willingness to conduct dialogue, on the other hand, it has subordinated the normalization of relations to the Holy See's unreserved acceptance of the PRC's conditions for exchanging recognition. In particular the appointment of bishops has emerged as the issue catalysing the differences between the two parties. While the Holy See appears determined to pursue diplomatic relations with the PRC, the Chinese authorities seem reluctant to compromise on their established religious policy. This attitude has become evident

especially in the aftermath of the most recent important initiatives that Benedict XVI has taken in order put an end to the diplomatic standoff with China.

### *High Hopes and Contradictory Gestures*

In February 1999, while conversing with some journalists during a reception at the Italian Embassy to the Holy See, Cardinal Angelo Sodano, the then Secretary of State, said: "Our nunciature in Taipei is the nunciature in China and if Beijing agrees, we can move it to Beijing. I don't say tomorrow, but even tonight."<sup>1</sup> Sodano also stressed that "Chinese Catholics are faithful citizens and servants of the State like the other citizens."<sup>2</sup> The Secretary of State made these statements just a few weeks before the state visit to Italy of Chinese President Jiang Zemin. On that occasion, Italian premier Massimo D'Alema - a post-Communist familiar with the logics and the language of his former ideology<sup>3</sup> - reportedly struck the right chord in explaining to his guest the relations between Italy and the Holy See and the principle of freedom for the Catholic Church. In fact, for a few months after the meeting there were insistent voices that diplomatic relations between Beijing and the Apostolic See would soon be established.<sup>4</sup> The combination of the statements of Cardinal Sodano and Jiang Zemin's apparent interest in having official relations with the Holy See led to expectations that were soon frustrated by a series of negative - although not purely hostile - moves by the PRC.

---

<sup>1</sup> Angelo Sodano as quoted in Joseph Zen, "Sino-Vatican Relations after Pope's Death", *Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong Documents*, 2005, <http://www.catholic.org.hk/document/050410zen-e.html>. Accessed 20 February 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Angelo Sodano as quoted in Bernardo Cervellera, *Missione Cina*, p. 213.

<sup>3</sup> Alberto Carosa, "First the Power, then the Government", *Catholic World News*, 6 December 2001, <http://www.cwnews.com/news/viewstory.cfm?recnum=20794>. Accessed 4 March 2007.

<sup>4</sup> Gianni Criveller, *China's Government Policy toward the Catholic Church in the Context of recent Developments*, conference paper, 7<sup>th</sup> European Catholic China Colloquium, Milan, 6-10 September 2006.

After the conclusion of the 1998 Synod of the Asian bishops, Papal diplomacy explored the possibility of John Paul II's visit to Hong Kong. In July 1999 Beijing publicly replied: since there were no diplomatic relations between the Vatican and China, it was inappropriate for the Pope to come.<sup>5</sup> By giving such a response, although hinting that the problem with the Holy See was political, the Chinese officially presented it as a diplomatic issue, therefore signalling their interest in a diplomatic solution of the differences with Rome. With this in mind, many Catholic scholars maintain that in August 1999 the Secretariat of Party Central issued a secret document, entitled 'Regarding the Strengthening of Catholic Church Work in the New Circumstances', also known as *Document No. 26*. The document was allegedly leaked to Pontifical agents in mainland China and Taiwan and its English translation was subsequently published by *Tripod*,<sup>6</sup> a quarterly review published in Hong Kong by the Holy Spirit Study Centre.<sup>7</sup> The document recommends that before and after the likely establishment of diplomatic relations between the PRC and the Holy See, the government should: expand and strengthen the CPCA; tighten the control of the Party over the official communities; adopt severe measures, including political re-education of the dissident clergy, to counter the influence of the underground Catholics and eventually "convert"<sup>8</sup> them. In substance, the Catholic scholars highlight that the document reveals that the Party considered diplomatic relations with the Holy See only as a mean to "win over the

---

<sup>5</sup> Joseph Zen, "Sino-Vatican Relations after Pope's Death", *Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong Documents*. See also Gianni Criveller, *China's Government Policy toward the Catholic Church in the Context of recent Developments*, p. 6.

<sup>6</sup> Secretariat of Chinese Communist Party Central, "Regarding the Strengthening of Catholic Church Work in the New Circumstances", *Tripod*, Vol. 20, No. 116, Autumn 2000, pp. 32-36.

<sup>7</sup> The Holy Spirit Study Centre, established in 1980, is an organ of the Diocese of Hong Kong. "It is a research institute whose primary practical task has been to gather, store and analyze pertinent data about China that will serve to broaden understanding of the Mainland's rapidly changing situation, and to effect appropriate Christian responses" (Holy Spirit Study Centre, "About us", *Holy Spirit Study Centre*, 2006, [http://www.hsstudyc.org.hk/en/en\\_intro.html](http://www.hsstudyc.org.hk/en/en_intro.html). Accessed 3 January 2007).

<sup>8</sup> Document No. 26 as quoted in Bernardo Cervellera, *Missione Cina*, p. 166.

majority of the members of the underground Church”<sup>9</sup> and reinforce its control over the official Catholic communities. Recognition of the Holy See would not have been translated into actual religious freedom for the Chinese Catholics.<sup>10</sup> Actually, in the ensuing months, while meetings between civil and (official) Church authorities in preparation of diplomatic relations with the Roman See were held all around the country, a hardening of the government’s control was clearly noticed by the clandestine as well as by the official Catholic communities.

On 6 January 2000, while John Paul II consecrated 12 bishops in Rome, five ‘official’ Chinese bishops were consecrated in Beijing without his approval.<sup>11</sup> The consecrations - which, according to the CPCA, were held for providing bishops for vacant dioceses<sup>12</sup> - were clearly intended to be a rebuff to the Papal authority<sup>13</sup> and left many observers speculating on the motivations of such an initiative. An answer can be attempted by considering three friendly gestures within the unfriendly act of the ‘patriotic’ consecrations. First, the Chinese allowed the reintegration in the liturgy of the episcopal ordination of a passage forbidden since 1958: the bishop officiating the ceremony publicly and loudly asked the candidates in Chinese: ‘Do you obey the successor of Peter?’ The reply being ‘yes’. Secondly, one of the prayers of the faithful was a prayer for the Pope. Thirdly, the spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Zhu Bangzao, declared: “We want to improve our

---

<sup>9</sup> Ibidem, p. 168.

<sup>10</sup> ‘Actual religious freedom’, from the Catholic Church’s viewpoint, includes not only the freedom of cult, “but also the possibility for believers to participate fully and actively in the social and political life of the country of which they are citizens, always as members of a faith community.” (Jean-Louis Tauran, *Is the Holy See a Political Power?*, p. 5).

<sup>11</sup> Jeroom Heyndrickx, “Why China Snubbed the Vatican”, *The Tablet*, 15 January 2000, <http://www.thetablet.co.uk/articles/6523>. Accessed 6 March 2007.

<sup>12</sup> Sandro Magister, “Diplomatic Relations with China? Maybe, but on One Condition”, *www.chiesa*, 1 September 2006, <http://chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it/articolo/81121?eng=y>. Accessed 18 March 2007.

<sup>13</sup> However, the Chinese initiative turned out half a failure. In fact the authorities had planned to appoint twelve bishops, but several candidates refused to proceed without the consent of Rome. Moreover, one hundred seminarians of the National Seminary refused to serve or attend the solemn Mass on the day. (Jeroom Heyndrickx, “Why China snubbed the Vatican”).



relations with the Holy See. But we do not want the Holy See to interfere in our internal affairs.”<sup>14</sup> The use of the term ‘Holy See’ in lieu of the usual ‘Vatican’ was also significant. All these elements perhaps reveal the true signal that Beijing wanted to send across the Tiber. The Chinese manifested their willingness to exchange recognition with the Holy See, but on their own conditions. In other words, they reaffirmed their acceptance, even at a formal level, of the primacy of the Pope in the ambit of faith and morals, but they made clear that any Papal claim to the administration and direction of the Chinese Church, including the appointment of bishops, was to be rejected as interference in their internal affairs.

These Chinese moves, therefore, should be considered as tactics aimed at clarifying the conditions for establishing relations with the Holy See rather than pure declarations of intransigence. By contrast, Beijing’s approach to the issue of Chinese martyrs was unequivocally hostile. Despite the disapproval expressed by the PRC government through the CPCA,<sup>15</sup> on 1 October 2000 the Pope went ahead with plans to canonize 120 Chinese martyrs, of which there were eighty-seven Chinese members of the laity and thirty-three missionaries, killed between 1814 and 1930.<sup>16</sup> *The People’s Daily* denounced this for “hurting the feelings of the Chinese people,”<sup>17</sup> and it asserted that “the so-called saints had violated Chinese laws, [...] playing accomplices to the imperialist and colonialist invasion of China,

---

<sup>14</sup> Zhu Bangzao as quoted in Jerroon Heyndrickx, “Why China snubbed the Vatican”.

<sup>15</sup> *People’s Daily*, “Chinese Catholics Denounce Vatican’s Planned Canonization of ‘Saints’”, 26 September 2000, [http://english.people.com.cn/english/200009/26/eng20000926\\_51319.html](http://english.people.com.cn/english/200009/26/eng20000926_51319.html). Accessed 15 March 2007.

<sup>16</sup> Notably, In August 2000 - 2 months ahead of the Catholic canonisation of October 1 - 222 martyrs killed during the Boxer Revolution were canonized by the Moscow Patriarchate without any protest from Beijing. China recognizes the Chinese Autonomous Orthodox Church only at regional level: in Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia. At the national level, the PRC recognises only five religions, namely Catholicism, Protestantism, Islam, Taoism, and Buddhism. (*Asianews.it*, “The Russian Orthodox Church seeks Beijing’s official recognition”, 28 June 2004, <http://www.asianews.it/view.php?l=en&art=1052>. Accessed 18 March 2007).

<sup>17</sup> Shi Yan, “The True Colours of the ‘Saints’”, *People’s Daily*, 3 October 2000, p. 1.

committing unpardonable crimes, and deserving the punishments they received.”<sup>18</sup>

A spokesman of the State Administration of Religious Affairs of the People’s Republic of China (SARA)<sup>19</sup> declared that “the Chinese people, including Chinese Catholics, can by no means tolerate the canonization.”<sup>20</sup> The spokesman concluded that “the Vatican, while expressing its intention to improve its relations with China, has time and time again interfered in China’s internal affairs, pointing out that the Vatican’s so-called ‘canonization’ had severely damaged the basis for the normalization of China-Vatican relations, and the Vatican should be held responsible for all of this.”<sup>21</sup> Even the date of the ceremony - the anniversary of the proclamation of the PRC - was harshly criticized by the regime. Patriotic Archbishop Michael Fu Tieshan, the then chairman of the CPCA and notoriously very close to the Communist Party, declared: “Choosing this date to canonize the so-called ‘saints’ is an open insult and humiliation against the Chinese Catholic adherents.”<sup>22</sup> In the middle of the crisis, the Pope reportedly wrote a personal letter to President Jiang Zemin, to explain that his only intention was honouring the Chinese people.<sup>23</sup> Jiang did not reply. Since then, while many Catholic Sinologists have insisted on the strictly religious nature of the 2000 canonizations and argued

---

<sup>18</sup> Ibidem

<sup>19</sup> SARA is a functional department under the State Council which oversees religious affairs and issues for the PRC. As previously noted, until 1998 SARA was known as Religious Affairs Bureau. However, SARA’s provincial and local offices are still known as Religious Affairs Bureaus. (GOV.cn, “State Administration for Religious Affairs”).

<sup>20</sup> *People’s Daily*, “China’s State Administration of Religious Affairs Spokesman on Vatican’s ‘Canonization of Saints’”, 2 October 2000, [http://english.people.com.cn/english/200010/01/eng20001001\\_51692.html](http://english.people.com.cn/english/200010/01/eng20001001_51692.html). Accessed 18 March 2007.

<sup>21</sup> Ibidem

<sup>22</sup> Michael Fu Tieshan as quoted in *People’s Daily*, “Chinese Bishop Criticizes Vatican Canonization in National Day Celebration”, 1 October 2000, [http://english.people.com.cn/english/200010/01/eng20001001\\_51688.html](http://english.people.com.cn/english/200010/01/eng20001001_51688.html). Accessed 21 March 2007.

<sup>23</sup> Gianni Criveller, *China’s Government Policy toward the Catholic Church in the Context of Recent Developments*, p. 7.

that Beijing abused the event for political purpose, Chinese officials have reaffirmed that the canonizations represented a defence of Western imperialism.<sup>24</sup>

On October 2001, on the anniversary of the Fourth Centenary of the arrival of Matteo Ricci in Beijing, John Paul II delivered the most significant speech on China of his pontificate. The Pope said that the “work of members of the Church in China was not always without error” and deplored the “negative repercussions” of a “kind of protection on the part of European political powers.”<sup>25</sup> He thus expressed his “deep sadness for these errors and limits of the past,” and asked for “the forgiveness and understanding of those who may have felt hurt in some way by such actions on the part of Christians.”<sup>26</sup> The Pope concluded by stressing that “historically, in ways that are certainly different but not in opposition to one another, China and the Catholic Church are two of the most ancient ‘institutions’ in existence and operating on the world scene: both, though in different domains - one in the political and social, the other in the religious and spiritual - encompass more than a thousand million sons and daughters.”<sup>27</sup> For these reasons, John Paul II invited Beijing to “overcome the misunderstandings of the past,” open “some form of dialogue” and normalize the relations with the Holy See in order “to work together for the good of Chinese people and for peace in the world.”<sup>28</sup> In his address the Pope also reassured the PRC government that Chinese neophytes, in embracing Christianity, did not in any way have to renounce loyalty to their

---

<sup>24</sup> John Allen, “New Chinese saints raise old animosities”, *National Catholic Reporter*, 13 October 2000, [http://www.natcath.com/NCR\\_Online/archives/101300/101300d.htm](http://www.natcath.com/NCR_Online/archives/101300/101300d.htm). Accessed 14 February 2007).

<sup>25</sup> John Paul II, “Message for the Fourth Centenary of the Arrival in Beijing of the Great Missionary and Scientist Matteo Ricci”, in Institute of Catholic History of Fu Jen Catholic University, *A Collection of Documents on the History of the 60 Years of Sino-Vatican Diplomatic Relations*, p. 228.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 229.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 230.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibidem*

country”<sup>29</sup> and that “the Catholic Church seeks no privilege from China and its leaders, but solely the resumption of dialogue in order to build a relationship based on mutual respect and deeper understanding.”<sup>30</sup>

The Papal speech was a gesture of great political and personal courage - no Western country has ever been asked by China to apologize or has spontaneously done so<sup>31</sup> - and represented a spectacular effort to re-engage China by apologizing and thus openly challenging the Chinese Communists to show their good-will and availability to negotiate with the Holy See. The speech conveyed an additional, subtler, message: besides representing a (partial) *mea culpa* and an earnest invitation to dialogue, it was also aimed at making once and for all clear to Beijing the power relations between the Catholic Church and China and their equal status in the hierarchy of history and civilization. The Pope, by highlighting that the PRC and the Catholic Church have the same number of ‘subjects’ seemed to indirectly answer ‘the same as you’ to the old Stalinist question ‘how many divisions has the Pope?’<sup>32</sup> Equally, to a nation which prides itself on being an ancient civilization with thousands of years of history, the successor of Peter reminded that also the Catholic Church is an ancient and noble institution. In substance, the ultimate message of the Pope was: let bygones be bygones, we are equals and we should thus conduct our relations on an equal footing, respecting our different provinces.

---

<sup>29</sup> Ibidem, p. 226-227.

<sup>30</sup> Ibidem, p. 227.

<sup>31</sup> Jeroom Heyndrickx, “An Olive Branch for China”, *Tripod*, Vol. 21, No. 123, Winter 2001, pp. 66-71.

<sup>32</sup> When Josef Stalin was told that Pope Pius XII opposed his policies, the Soviet leader famously replied: “How many divisions has the Pope?” (Rick Hampson, “Pope Changed the World”, *USA Today*, 3 April 2005, [http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2005-04-03-pope-legacy\\_x.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2005-04-03-pope-legacy_x.htm). Accessed 19 March 2007).

Let us bear in mind the example of Matteo Ricci, a Catholic priest-scholar fond of Chinese culture, welcomed and honoured in China as an equal.<sup>33</sup>

As in 1971, Beijing did not seize the political moment. The Chinese limited themselves to restating the conditions - pedantically repeated for twenty years - for exchanging diplomatic recognition with Rome: the Holy See must sever relations with Taipei and should refrain from interfering in China's internal affairs. By doing so, the PRC missed a golden opportunity to start negotiations with the Holy See from an advantageous position and show the international community its willingness to leave a cold-war mentality and ideological intransigence behind. While in the early 1970s Chinese behaviour was explicable in terms of unfavourable international and domestic situations, China's rejection of the olive branch extended by the Pope in 2001 has a possible dual interpretation. The first reading is that the Communist Party was internally divided on the issue. One faction, including Jiang Zemin, was supposedly keen on establishing relations, or at least opening negotiations, with the Apostolic See. Another, namely the Party's leftists,<sup>34</sup> was instead fearful of the idea of the Pope exerting influence in China and successfully undermined the efforts of their opponents.<sup>35</sup> An alternative explanation is that, after the initial enthusiasm of the Chinese President, the upper echelons of the Party - at the beginning of a phase of leadership succession and

---

<sup>33</sup> In his speech John Paul II called Ricci also by his Chinese name: *Li Madou*, 'the Sage of the West'.

<sup>34</sup> As pointed out by Fr Angelo Lazzarotto, an experienced missionary from the Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions (PIME), China's Communist leadership "has no single stand concerning its religious policy - beside more liberal officials [...] there are ideologist conservatives who do not accept any kind of permissivism." (Angelo Lazzarotto as quoted in Włodzimierz Redzioch, "What future of the Church in China?", *Niedziela*, No. 32, 2007, [http://sunday.niedziela.pl/artykul.php?nr=200409&dz=swiat&id\\_art=00090](http://sunday.niedziela.pl/artykul.php?nr=200409&dz=swiat&id_art=00090). Accessed 13 December 2007).

<sup>35</sup> Jeroom Heyndrickx, "An Olive Branch for China".

transition in Beijing<sup>36</sup> - soon came to agree that Sino-Pontifical relations were “to be considered one of the most delicate and thorny issues, on which for the moment nobody should make a move.”<sup>37</sup> They thus decided to persist with the policy of entrenchment on the principle of ‘independence’ for the Chinese Catholic Church and therefore snubbed the Pope’s appeal for the opening of a constructive dialogue.

In March 2003 Beijing sent the Holy See another strong signal of intransigence on religious freedom for the Chinese Catholics: a joint conference of ‘official’ bishops and standing committee members of the CPCA issued the so called ‘Three Documents’ on Church management.<sup>38</sup> As Sinologist Fr Gianni Criveller points out, the Three Documents are particularly significant because albeit issued, at least nominally, by a body of the Chinese Church, they have the mark of the CPCA, the *raison d’être* of which is to support the leadership of the Communist Party. In fact, the documents strongly advocate independence from the Apostolic See and contradict important rules and traditions of the Catholic Church. The most serious departure from the Catholic tradition and practice is the recurrent call for the clergy and faithful “to uphold the leadership of the Communist Party, to adapt to the Socialist society, and to ‘democratically’ run Church affairs.”<sup>39</sup> In sum, the documents state that in the Chinese Catholic Church everything must be subservient to the CPCA and everyone, without exceptions, must abide by its

---

<sup>36</sup> Raymond Tai, “The Vatican Dilemma: Taipei and/or Beijing?”, public lecture, International Institute of Asian Studies and Sinological Institute of Leiden University, Leiden (The Netherlands), 25 April 2002, *International Institute for Asian Studies Newsletter*, No. 28, August 2002, p. 2.

<sup>37</sup> Anonymous Chinese high officials of Jiang Zemin’s entourage as quoted in Bernardo Cervellera, *Missione Cina*, p. 209.

<sup>38</sup> “The three documents are entitled: *A Management System for Catholic Dioceses in China*, *The System for the Joint Conference of Chairpersons of the Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association and of the Bishops Conference of the Catholic Church in China*, and *Work Regulations for the Catholic Patriotic Association*.” (Gianni Criveller, *China’s Government Policy toward the Catholic Church in the Context of recent Developments*, p. 7).

<sup>39</sup> Gianni Criveller, *China’s Government Policy toward the Catholic Church in the Context of recent Developments*, p. 8.

directives. In this sense, the documents represent a great leap backwards and a source of further tension in the relations between the Holy See and the PRC. However, the Three Documents simply mirrored the line reaffirmed by Jiang Zemin himself in December 2001: “The Principle of independence must be followed and foreign interference in China’s religious work should be absolutely prohibited [...] the Party’s leadership over religion should be strengthened.”<sup>40</sup>

*Benedict XVI: Perseverance in Dialogue and Coordination of Efforts*

The election of Benedict XVI raised many expectations about a possible deal between China and the Holy See. Despite John Paul II persistently having sought a diplomatic breakthrough with Beijing<sup>41</sup>, Chinese leaders ultimately distrusted the man who helped bring down communism in Eastern Europe. As Anthony Liu Bainan, the influential vice-chairman of the CPCA, put it: “We remember what happened in Poland and the former Soviet Union [...] No one can deny the Pope and the Vatican played an important role there, and those who promoted the great changes in Eastern Europe want it to happen in China as well.”<sup>42</sup> Moreover, many analysts assumed that, after suffering the affront of the presence of Taiwanese President Chen Shui-bian in Rome among two-hundred heads of state attending the funeral of John Paul II - the Chinese having limited themselves to send messages

---

<sup>40</sup> Jiang Zemin as quoted in Raymond Tai, “The Vatican Dilemma: Taipei and/or Beijing?”.

<sup>41</sup> “From 1979 onwards, he delivered at least 30 official speeches about the Christian presence in the People’s Republic of China, and the desire for relations of collaboration between the Holy See and Beijing” (Bernardo Cervellera, “Afraid of the Pope, China closes its doors”, *Asianews.it*, 5 April 2005, <http://www.asianews.it/index.php?l=en&art=2962>. Accessed 19 March 2007).

<sup>42</sup> Anthony Liu Bainan as quoted in Philip Pan, “Up From the Underground”, *Washington Post*, 29 April 2005, [http://www.washingtonpost.com/wpdyn/content/article/2005/04/28/AR2005042801665\\_pf.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wpdyn/content/article/2005/04/28/AR2005042801665_pf.html). Accessed 20 March 2007.

of condolence through journalists<sup>43</sup> - Beijing had become more prone to negotiate.<sup>44</sup>

During a press conference on 20 April 2005, the day after the election of Benedict XVI, the PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Qin Gang said he learned that two Chinese Catholic groups - the CPCA and the Chinese Catholic Bishops College - had sent congratulatory messages and told churches across China to pray for the new Pope. Qin added that China was ready to improve relations with the Vatican on the basis of the two aforementioned principles for China-Vatican relations. "We hope under the leadership of the new Pope, Vatican could create beneficial conditions for the improvement of the China-Vatican relations,"<sup>45</sup> the spokesman concluded. The declarations of Qin Gang, although conciliatory in tone, did not represent a step forward towards recognition, being nothing more than an exhortation to accept Beijing's preconditions for diplomatic relations. China's stance was reaffirmed the following day by Premier Wen Jiabao who said that China was willing to build relations with the Vatican only after Benedict XVI

---

<sup>43</sup> At a regular press briefing in Beijing, Foreign Ministry spokesman Qin Gang said that: "Under current circumstances, China won't send representatives to the Vatican." (Qin Gang as quoted in *Ecumenical News International*, "Beijing snubs papal funeral, despite Pope's regrets on not visiting China", 7 April 2005, <http://www.eni.ch/highlights/news.shtml?2005/04>. Accessed 20 March 2007). See also *Asianews.it*, "Taiwanese President, Chen Shui-bian, to attend the Pope's funeral", 6 April 2005, <http://www.asianews.it/index.php?l=en&art=2973>. Accessed 20 March 2007.

<sup>44</sup> Frank Ching, "Sino-Vatican Relations after Pope John Paul II", *China Brief*, Vol. 5, No. 8, 12 April 2005, pp. 3-5. See also Francesco Sisci, "China, Catholic Church at a crossroads", *Asia Times*, 12 April 2005, <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China/GD12Ad05.html>. Accessed 20 March 2007.

<sup>45</sup> Qin Gang as quoted in Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the United States of America, "China congratulates Ratzinger as new pope (04/20/05)", 20 April 2005, <http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/gyzg/t192447.htm>. Accessed 21 March 2007. It is noteworthy that the Chinese spokesman refrained from using the term 'Holy See' and mentioning the Papal name of the newly elected Roman Pontiff, referring to John Paul II's successor solely as "Pope" or "Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger of Germany". Interestingly, a picture of the new Pope was displayed on the website of the PRC's embassy in the United States of America, precisely in the page reporting the declarations of Qin Gang on the election of the new head of the Catholic Church. The caption of the picture read: "Pope Benedict XVI, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger of Germany, waves from a balcony of St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican after being elected by the conclave of cardinals, April 19, 2005."



decided to conform to the One China Principle.<sup>46</sup> Wen declared that “China maintains that it is willing to build relations with the Vatican based on two principles: The Vatican must recognize that there is only one China in the world, and the Vatican can’t interfere in China’s internal affairs.”<sup>47</sup>

On 24 March 2006 Benedict XVI gave a strong signal about his China policy by imparting the purple to Joseph Zen,<sup>48</sup> Bishop of Hong Kong and a firm advocate of democracy and religious freedom, to the extent that his criticism of the Communist rule had made him *persona non grata* in mainland China from 1998 to 2004.<sup>49</sup> The new Cardinal made his debut with praise for the Chinese Catholics persecuted because of their loyalty to the Pope,<sup>50</sup> which greatly irritated Beijing. In any case, in his message to the Chinese Catholics, he asked that they be patient and helpful in constructing an ‘harmonious society’, one of the leitmotifs of PRC President Hu Jintao.<sup>51</sup> In addition, Cardinal Zen hinted that he was going to play an important role in the chess game with Beijing. He said: “I think that the Holy Father wants to make use of my experience in China and will want to receive some information,

---

<sup>46</sup> Beijing requires all countries seeking diplomatic relations with it to adhere to the principle that there is just ‘one China’ including Taiwan and that the PRC government is the sole legitimate government of China (*China Report*, “White Paper: The One-China Principle and the Taiwan Issue”, No. 36, 2000, pp. 277-292).

<sup>47</sup> Wen Jabao as quoted in *Zenit*, “China Lays Down Terms for Vatican Ties”, 21 April 2005, [www.zenit.org/english/visualizza.phtml?sid=69705](http://www.zenit.org/english/visualizza.phtml?sid=69705). Accessed 21 March 2007).

<sup>48</sup> Zen is currently the only Chinese Cardinal under the age of eighty eligible to vote in Papal conclaves.

<sup>49</sup> *Zenit*, “Mgr Joseph Zen Ze-kiun «créé» cardinal par Benoît XVI”, 22 February 2006, [news.catholique.org/7765-chine-mgr-joseph-zen-ze-kiun-cree-cardinal](http://news.catholique.org/7765-chine-mgr-joseph-zen-ze-kiun-cree-cardinal). Accessed 8 March 2007.

<sup>50</sup> “The red colour I am wearing is meant to signify a cardinal’s willingness to shed blood. Yet it is not my blood that has been shed until now: it is the blood and the tears from the numerous, nameless, heroes in both the official and underground Churches who [in China] have suffered for being faithful to the Church”. (Joseph Zen as quoted in Sandro Magister, “The Vatican’s New Policy on China Has a Colour: Cardinal Red”, *www.chiesa*, 28 March 2006, <http://chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it/dettaglio.jsp?id=47284&eng=y>. Accessed 10 March 2007).

<sup>51</sup> The agency “Asia News”, usually well informed about China, commented in a dispatch on 26 March 2006: “Bishop Zen’s reference to a ‘harmonious society’ intends to convey to China that the call for full religious freedom of the Church does not constitute ‘a hostile act’ against the country. Rather it represents one of the necessary steps for Beijing to reach reconciliation also at home, given the widespread faith renewal under way in Chinese society”. (*Asianews.it*, “Card. Zen: My red hat for the blood and tears of the Church in China”, 26 March 2006, <http://www.asianews.it/index.php?l=en&art=5740>. Accessed 10 March 2007).

and maybe even some suggestions, from me [...] I have a great desire to talk with the Beijing authorities, because, since I know the Church well from within, I can better explain how it works to our leaders. In fact, I am afraid that they have many mistaken or outdated conceptions.”<sup>52</sup> The reaction of Beijing to the bestowal of the red biretta upon Zen was harsh.<sup>53</sup> Anthony Liu Bainan went so far as to label Zen’s elevation to the Cardinalate “an hostile act.”<sup>54</sup> The prelate in fact was - and is - regarded as a thorn in the side by Chinese officials who routinely blame him for their troubled relations with the Holy See.<sup>55</sup>

The Papal diplomats explained that the Apostolic Palace meant to send Beijing an unequivocal message: the Apostolic See was offering the PRC frank friendship, not uncritical and complaisant friendliness.<sup>56</sup> Cardinal Giovanni Lajolo, the then Secretary for Relations with States,<sup>57</sup> made it very clear that the Holy See expected the PRC to consider the elevation of bishop Zen as a sign of special attention

---

<sup>52</sup> Joseph Zen as quoted in Sandro Magister, “The Vatican’s New Policy on China Has a Colour: Cardinal Red”.

<sup>53</sup> The PRC’s media ignored the event, and the authorities blocked any celebration of it.

<sup>54</sup> Anthony Liu Bainan as quoted in Keith Bradsher, “Gentle Cleric’s Stature Grows as He Risks Ire of China”, *New York Times*, 8 July 2006, [http://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/08/world/asia/08zen.html?\\_r=1&oref=slogin](http://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/08/world/asia/08zen.html?_r=1&oref=slogin). Accessed 10 March 2007.

<sup>55</sup> The Chinese Government was also gravely disturbed by the fact that the delegation of family and friends of Cardinal Zen received by Benedict XVI on March 27 2005 included two of Beijing’s least favourite people in Hong Kong: “Jimmy Lai, the tycoon whose Apple Daily newspaper urges readers to participate in democracy marches; and Martin Lee, the most influential politician in the territory’s democracy movement” (Jim Yardley and Keith Bradsher, “In China-Vatican Fight, the Bishops are the Pawns”, *New York Times*, 13 May 2006 <http://www.ihf.com/articles/2006/05/12/news/china.php>. Accessed 14 March 2007).

<sup>56</sup> “The pope has demonstrated his love and respect for the Chinese Church and people by including at least one Chinese prelate in the college of cardinals still under the age of eighty. The bishop of Hong Kong, the largest Chinese diocese in the world, has a profound knowledge of the Chinese Church, and is universally recognized for his courageous witness - so he was the natural candidate for this position. Now, not bestowing the purple on Zen, that would have been a political move indeed, and one incomprehensible from an ecclesial point of view.” (Gianni Criveller as quoted in Sandro Magister, “Diplomatic Relations with China? Maybe, but on One Condition”).

<sup>57</sup> *Repetita iuvant*, the Secretary for Relations with States, informally called ‘the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Holy See’, is an archbishop heading the Section for Relations with States of the Secretariat of State of the Holy See. The current Secretary for Relations with States is Monsignor Dominique Mamberti who took over the then Monsignor Giovanni Lajolo on 15 September 2006. Archbishop Lajolo was elevated to the Cardinalate on 24 November 2007.

toward China: "In making the bishop of Hong Kong a Cardinal, the Pope trusts that this gesture will be understood correctly and, in a certain way, reciprocated."<sup>58</sup> On the relations between Beijing and the Holy See, Lajolo - after repeating the usual assertion that "Chinese Catholics do not feel any less Chinese because they are Catholic" - said that whenever "open and stable relations between the Chinese government and the Holy See might be established, any tensions could be overcome afterwards without any ambiguity."<sup>59</sup> At the same time the Holy See - the Archbishop also said - "has clearly explained what it is asking for, what it is ready to concede and what it can never give up if it is to remain faithful to itself."<sup>60</sup> He added: "In our opinion, the time is ripe."<sup>61</sup> Lajolo concluded by inviting the Chinese government not to "ignore the expectations of their own people, as well as the signs of the times."<sup>62</sup> In sum, for the Holy See the investiture of Cardinal Zen was a way to reaffirm the principles of its stance towards China, but also to invite Beijing's government to open a frank and productive dialogue with Rome.

On this occasion, the Holy See's call for dialogue seemed to have worked. A few days after Lajolo's declarations, the Chinese government publicly admitted for the first time that contacts existed between China and the Vatican on the question of diplomatic relations. Ye Xiaowen, Director of SARA, revealed that the contacts between Rome and Beijing "had been continuing all along but it is hard to set a

---

<sup>58</sup> Giovanni Lajolo as quoted in Sandro Magister, "The Vatican's New Policy on China Has a Colour: Cardinal Red"

<sup>59</sup> Ibidem

<sup>60</sup> Ibidem

<sup>61</sup> Giovanni Lajolo as quoted in Chang Yun-ping, "Top envoy says Vatican ready to relocate embassy", *Taipei Times*, 30 March 2006, <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2006/03/30/2003299983>. Accessed 14 March 2007.

<sup>62</sup> Giovanni Lajolo as quoted in *Asianews.it*, "Card. Zen: My red hat for the blood and tears of the Church in China".

timetable.”<sup>63</sup> The Chinese official, however, reaffirmed that Rome’s acceptance of the two traditional pre-conditions for negotiation was essential. He said: “We can establish diplomatic relations with the Vatican very soon if the two principles are accepted, but it is very hard for us to do so if the two principles are violated.”<sup>64</sup> Apart from these statements of ‘inflexible flexibility’, it appeared that the dialogue was progressing slowly but steadily. This progression in Sino-Pontifical relations had been confirmed some months earlier by Cardinal Sodano. In October 2005, the prelate stated that the Holy See and China were involved in “conversations, contacts,”<sup>65</sup> although not proper “negotiations.”<sup>66</sup> “We have said many times that Taiwan is not an obstacle,”<sup>67</sup> the then Cardinal Secretary of State pointed out.<sup>68</sup> However, the real stumbling block - China’s lack of respect for religious freedom and for the unity of the Catholic Church - remained. Sodano declared that the Holy See was “ready for dialogue, ready for contacts, ready to explain its traditions,”<sup>69</sup> but “we have to always insist that the Church is one, in the entire world, in all cultures.”<sup>70</sup> This was the non-negotiable point.

---

<sup>63</sup> Ye Xiaowen as quoted in *People’s Daily*, “China, Vatican in contact for restoring ties”, 3 April 2006, [http://english.people.com.cn/200604/03/eng20060403\\_255465.html](http://english.people.com.cn/200604/03/eng20060403_255465.html). Accessed 14 March 2007.

<sup>64</sup> Ibidem

<sup>65</sup> Notably, in October 2005, Cardinal Roger Mahony, the Archbishop of Los Angeles, took a two-week ‘sabbatical’ to China, where he reportedly celebrated Mass at Saint Peter’s, a ‘patriotic’ church in Shanghai. That act made him the first Cardinal to say mass publicly in Shanghai since the Communist takeover. (Ryan Grant, “Mahony’s China Sabbatical and What It May Mean”, *Los Angeles Lay Catholic Mission*, December 2005, <http://www.losangelesmission.com/ed/articles/2005/0512rg.htm>. Accessed 9 March 2007).

<sup>66</sup> Angelo Sodano as quoted in *Asianews.it*, “The problem with Beijing is religious freedom, says Cardinal Sodano”, 26 October 2005, <http://www.asianews.it/view.php?l=en&art=4452>. Accessed 20 February 2007.

<sup>67</sup> Angelo Sodano as quoted in *ABC News Online*, “Vatican lists conditions for ties with China”, 26 October 2005, [www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/archive/200510.htm](http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/archive/200510.htm). Accessed 20 February 2007.

<sup>68</sup> Cardinal Angelo Sodano reiterated his 1999 declaration about the Holy See’s readiness to comply with the One China principle: “If we could have ties with Beijing, then - not tomorrow but tonight - the nuncio, or rather the chargé d’affaires who is now in Taiwan, would head for Beijing.” (Angelo Sodano as quoted in *Catholic World News*, “Chinese Officials Confirm Talks with Vatican”, 21 February 2008, <http://www.cwnews.com/news/viewstory.cfm?recnum=56762>. Accessed 5 March 2008).

<sup>69</sup> Ibidem

<sup>70</sup> Angelo Sodano as quoted in Philip Pullella, “Vatican lists conditions for ties with China”, *Reuters*, 25 October 2005,

For the Holy See, religious freedom and the unity of the Church first of all mean that the Chinese bishops must be ‘in communion’ with the Pope and that they must be nominated or, at least, subsequently approved by him. It seemed that an interim solution had been eventually found on the issue of episcopal ordination: since 2000, all the ordinations in China had the tacit and informal approval of both the Holy See and the government. For many observers such a *modus vivendi* was an encouraging sign<sup>71</sup> and the stepping stone to overcome the main obstacle on the road to formal negotiations.<sup>72</sup> There were insistent statements that diplomatic relations were imminent but, as just as in 2000, some sectors of the Chinese apparatus used the ordination of bishops as means to wreck years of patient diplomacy.<sup>73</sup> In April and May 2006 two ‘Patriotic’ bishops were consecrated without Pontifical mandate.<sup>74</sup> The Holy See was indignant with Beijing and protested with unusual vehemence, but did not cut the thread of dialogue. As soon as June, in an attempt to ease the strident confrontation with Beijing, the Pope sent two expert diplomats, Archbishop Claudio Celli and Monsignor Gianfranco Rota Graziosi,<sup>75</sup> to China for secret talks;<sup>76</sup> but apparently their meeting did not lead to any breakthroughs. Reportedly, “no dialogue took place.”<sup>77</sup>

---

[http://www.redorbit.com/news/international/284211/vatican\\_lists\\_conditions\\_for\\_ties\\_with\\_china/index.html](http://www.redorbit.com/news/international/284211/vatican_lists_conditions_for_ties_with_china/index.html). Accessed 20 February 2007.

<sup>71</sup> However, In October of 2005 Benedict XVI invited four bishops from mainland China to the worldwide synod being held at the Vatican. Three of these belonged to the official Church, and one to the clandestine Church. All the four bishops were denied permission to go (Sandro Magister, “The Pope Is Asking China for Freedom, Not Forgiveness”, *www.chiesa*, 8 May 2006, <http://chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it/dettaglio.jsp?id=54442&eng=y>. Accessed 13 March 2007).

<sup>72</sup> Gianni Valente, “The long road and ‘accidents along the way’”.

<sup>73</sup> Catholic Sinologist Gianni Criveller points to the CPCA, the United Front and the Religious Affairs Office as the main actors in sabotaging the attempts of rapprochement in this period (Sandro Magister, “The Pope Is Asking China for Freedom, Not Forgiveness”).

<sup>74</sup> Alexa Olesen, “China’s Church Defies Vatican Objections”, *Associated Press*, 30 April 2006, [http://missionxp.webblogg.se/300406202907\\_chinas\\_church\\_defies\\_vatican\\_obj.html](http://missionxp.webblogg.se/300406202907_chinas_church_defies_vatican_obj.html). Accessed 20 March 2007.

<sup>75</sup> “Though not working in the Secretariat of State, Archbishop Celli has been for years an expert on relations between Rome and Beijing and is a veteran visitor to China”. Monsignor Rota Graziosi is an official of the Secretariat of State. (*Spero News*, “Vatican delegation goes to Beijing”, 27 June 2006, [www.speroforum.com/site/article.asp?idCategory=33&idsub=122&id=4207](http://www.speroforum.com/site/article.asp?idCategory=33&idsub=122&id=4207). Accessed 22 March 2007).

In addition, one more unapproved ordination was held in November despite contrary assurances of the Chinese government.<sup>78</sup> Once more, the Holy See felt betrayed. Cardinal Zen went to the lengths of describing the ordination as “indecent and astounding.”<sup>79</sup> Despite the incident, China’s Foreign Ministry insisted that it was sincere in exploring dialogue with Rome - obviously on the basis of Beijing’s two preconditions - thus suggesting that the ordination organized by the CPCA was against the orders of the government. Even admitting such a possibility, it was clear that all the progress towards the exchange of recognition had been erased. Whatever the declarations of (uncompromising) good-will, they could not change the situation.

Benedict XVI, however, decided to continue along the road of dialogue with an enhanced coordination of efforts. For this purpose, in January 2007 the Pope called a two-day meeting in the Vatican in order to have a progress report on the policy to be carried out towards China.<sup>80</sup> The summit, chaired by the new Secretary of State Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone - a longtime trusted collaborator of the former Cardinal Ratzinger - was attended by top officials from the Secretariat of State and the

---

<sup>76</sup> Michael Sheridan, “Vatican fights to save bishops held by China”, *Sunday Times*, 18 June 2006, <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/article675941.ece>. Accessed 22 March 2007.

<sup>77</sup> Jeroom Heyndrickx, “No confrontation, but dialogue in truth!: A call from Pope Benedict XVI to the PRC and to all Chinese faithful”, *UCA News*, 29 January 2007, [http://www.catholic.org/international/international\\_story.php?id=22847&page=2](http://www.catholic.org/international/international_story.php?id=22847&page=2). Accessed 23 February 2007.

<sup>78</sup> *Asianews.it*, “Card. Zen: Il governo ha chiesto all'Associazione Patriottica di bloccare le ordinazioni illecite”, 1 June 2006, <http://www.asianews.it/index.php?l=it&art=6326>. Accessed 26 February 2007.

<sup>79</sup> Joseph Zen as quoted in *Catholic News*, “Chinese Bishop abducted, escapes over illicit ordination”, 1 December 2006, [www.cathnews.com/news/612/6.php](http://www.cathnews.com/news/612/6.php). Accessed 12 March 2007).

<sup>80</sup> As the public record shows, the last high level meeting on the Church in China had been held five years earlier. In February 2002, the newly appointed head of the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples, Cardinal Sepe, organized a four-day special consultation at Ariccia, Italy. Sepe summoned fifty-one China-experts together with religious superiors from Europe, Asia and the United States whose religious men and women had been engaging in the Middle Kingdom. The prelate wanted to be given a comprehensive picture on the situation of the Catholic Church in China, regarding what kind of bridging work they had been doing and what their future plans were. This consultation was necessary because Cardinal Sepe and his closest collaborators “had very limited knowledge of China affairs.” (Beatrice Leung, “Sino-Vatican Relations at the Century’s Turn”, p. 359).

Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, as well as various figures involved in mission towards China.<sup>81</sup> The quality of the people taking part in the meeting was a clear indication that Benedict XVI had placed China at the centre of his religious geopolitics and wanted to devise a joint strategy for relations with Beijing. The communiqué issued after the meeting is a key document for understanding the new Papal line towards the PRC. In the press release, the Holy See announced the establishment of communion with the Pope among “almost the entirety” of the bishops installed by the CPCA in opposition to Rome<sup>82</sup> and noted the “surprising growth of the ecclesial community”<sup>83</sup> in China. These two statements, besides being an official recognition of the remarkable progress towards the unity of the Church in China and the sharp increase of the Chinese flock, were plausibly aimed at prompting the Chinese authorities to acknowledge the failure of the policy of setting up a schismatic church in their country.<sup>84</sup> In consideration of the new situation<sup>85</sup> - the communiqué seems to suggest between the lines - it would be in

---

<sup>81</sup> Among the Chinese participants there were Cardinal Zen, accompanied by his Auxiliary Bishop John Tong, the Bishop of Macau Lai Hung-seng, and Cardinal Paul Shan Kuo-hsi, Bishop of Kaohsiung (Taiwan). The Roman Curia was well represented by Monsignor Mamberti, the Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, Cardinal Ivan Dias, and that of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Monsignor William J. Levada. Monsignor Eugene Nugent, the Hong Kong-based ‘semi-official’ representative of the Holy See to China, was also present.

<sup>82</sup> Already in March 2004, *La Civiltà Cattolica* - a Jesuit journal having each issue examined by the Holy See’s Secretariat of State before it is printed - had stated that forty-nine of the seventy-nine China’s registered bishops had been approved by the Apostolic See (Vermader Benoîte, “C’è un risveglio religioso in Cina?”, Vol. 1, *La Civiltà Cattolica*, Vol. 1, No. 3689, 6 March 2004, pp. 500-509).

<sup>83</sup> *Holy See News Services*, “Comunicato della Sala Stampa Vaticana della Santa Sede: Riunione sulla Situazione della Chiesa Cattolica nella Cina Continentale - Traduzione in lingua inglese”, 20 January 2007, [http://212.77.1.245/news\\_services/bulletin/news/19586.php?index=19586&po\\_date=20.01.2007&lang=it](http://212.77.1.245/news_services/bulletin/news/19586.php?index=19586&po_date=20.01.2007&lang=it). Accessed 22 January 2007.

<sup>84</sup> As Jean-Paul Wiest, a Beijing-based Catholic scholar, stated in 2006: “A great deal of reconciliation has occurred. The so-called difference between the state-sanctioned church and the underground church is less and less meaningful.” (Jean-Paul Wiest as quoted in Tim Johnson, “In corners of China, a wounded Catholic Church begins to heal”, *ParishWorld Catholic Magazine*, 20 May 2006, [http://www.parishworld.net/con\\_CatholicNews.cfm?contentUUID=69CDD869-1143-E0A9-5946562E7D42B3BA%7C200605&arcView=May\\_2006](http://www.parishworld.net/con_CatholicNews.cfm?contentUUID=69CDD869-1143-E0A9-5946562E7D42B3BA%7C200605&arcView=May_2006). Accessed 25 March 2007).

<sup>85</sup> “After long years of forced separation, the overwhelming majority of the bishops of the official Church have been legitimated by the magnanimity of the Holy Father. [...] Especially over the last few years, it has become more and more clear that the bishops ordained without the approval of the Roman pontiff are accepted neither by the clergy nor by the faithful.” Joseph Zen as quoted in

the interest of Beijing to take advantage of Rome's "will to continue along the path of respectful and constructive dialogue with the governing authorities" and "overcome the misunderstandings of the past" in order to achieve "normalization of relations at all levels."<sup>86</sup>

However, the most important part of the press release was the final paragraph. In fact, the communiqué ended with an announcement of historical importance: Benedict XVI, "who was fully informed of the proposals reached in the course of the meeting, has benevolently decided to address a letter to Catholics in China."<sup>87</sup> Even more than the investiture of Cardinal Zen and the summoning of the meeting on China, the Pope's intention to write a letter to the Chinese faithful revealed that China ranks high on the geopolitical agenda of Benedict XVI. In addition, a few days after the release of the communiqué, Cardinal Zen declared that the Holy See was going to set up a standing committee in order to coordinate the work of the Church's China-hands and the departments of the Roman Curia. The response of Beijing, albeit not unfriendly, was substantially the usual one. On 23 January 2007, a spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, after acknowledging that the "Vatican held a meeting recently on the Catholic issue in China and issued a communiqué," substantially restated the non-negotiable demands to establish relations and added that the Chinese government hoped that "the Vatican can face up to the fact of China's freedom of religious belief and the development of the Catholicism in China, and create conditions to normalize China-Vatican relations

---

Sandro Magister, "Rome Is Calling Beijing - But the Connection Keeps Getting Interrupted", *www.chiesa*, 27 October 2005, <http://chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it/articolo/41210?&eng=y>. Accessed 7 March 2007.

<sup>86</sup> *Holy See News Services*, "Comunicato della Sala Stampa Vaticana della Santa Sede: Riunione sulla Situazione della Chiesa Cattolica nella Cina Continentale - Traduzione in lingua inglese".

<sup>87</sup> *Ibidem*



by its concrete actions.”<sup>88</sup> The spokesperson did not comment on the announcement of a Papal letter to Chinese Catholics. Once again, it seemed that Rome’s willingness to negotiate had not been reciprocated. In substance, the public response of the Chinese government to the Pontifical overtures should be interpreted as a further confirmation that, probably, the present CPC’s leadership and the government have “not yet positively confronted the issue of religious freedom in general and of relations with the Holy See in particular.”<sup>89</sup>

### *Conclusion*

The analysis of the last decade of Sino-Pontifical interaction - as illustrated in this chapter - has identified at least three important elements regarding the state of the relations between the Apostolic See and Beijing. First, the issue of “Vatican interference in China’s internal affairs, including in the name of religion,”<sup>90</sup> which is condensed into the dispute over the appointment of bishops, has clearly egressed as the real stumbling block to the ending of the diplomatic stalemate. On the other hand, the Chinese demand that the “the Vatican must sever the so-called ‘diplomatic relations’ with Taiwan, recognize that the Government of the People’s

---

<sup>88</sup> Liu Jianchao as quoted in Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, “Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Liu Jianchao’s Regular Press Conference on 23 January, 2007”, <http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/fyrth/t291388.htm>. Accessed 24 January 2007. As PRC officials unfailingly do, the Chinese spokesperson ‘confused’ the Holy See with the VCS.

<sup>89</sup> Gianni Criveller as quoted in Sandro Magister, “Diplomatic Relations with China? Maybe, but on One Condition”.

<sup>90</sup> Liu Jianchao as quoted in Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, “Foreign Ministry Spokesman Liu Jianchao's Regular Press Conference on 9 May 2006”, <http://www.chinaembassy.org.nz/eng/zt/mfasr/t251459.htm>. Accessed 26 March 2007.

Republic of China is the sole legal government representing the whole China, and Taiwan is an inalienable part of China,”<sup>91</sup> does not seem to be an insurmountable obstacle. Second, the Holy See appears firmly determined to step up dialogue with China in order to break the enduring diplomatic deadlock. To this aim, Papal diplomacy has intensified its efforts to engage Beijing in a purposeful negotiation process. Third, although the Chinese occasionally send Rome signals of a readiness for negotiation, they are hardly showing any will to compromise on governmental control over the ecclesial life of the Church in China, especially over the ‘democratic election’ of the Chinese Catholic hierarchy. As reaffirmed in 2006 by the PRC’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson, the fundamental principles in handling relations with the Apostolic See, “remain consistent, clear and unchanged.”<sup>92</sup>

---

<sup>91</sup> Liu Jianchao as quoted in Frank Ching, “Sino-Vatican Relations after Pope John Paul II”.

<sup>92</sup> Liu Jianchao as quoted in Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, “Foreign Ministry Spokesman Liu Jianchao’s Regular Press Conference on 9 May 2006”.

## Estimated Statistics for the Catholic Church in China, 1996<sup>1</sup>

<b>Number of Catholics:</b>	10,000,000
<b>Number of Dioceses:</b>	138
<b>Number of Bishops:</b>	
in the Open Church	70
in the Underground Church	60
<b>Number of Priests:</b>	
in the Open Church	1,000
in the Underground Church	1,000
<b>Number of Nuns:</b>	
in the Open Church	2,000
in the Underground Church	2,000
<b>Number of Seminaries:</b>	
in the Open Church	24
in the Underground Church	10
<b>Number of Seminarians:</b>	
in the Open Church	1,000
in the Underground Church	700
<b>Number of Novitiates:</b>	
in the Open Church	40
in the Underground Church	20
<b>Number of Nuns in Formation:</b>	
in the Open Church	1,500
in the Underground Church	1,000

<sup>1</sup> Holy Spirit Study Centre, "Estimated Statistics of Chinese Catholic Church, 1996", <http://www.hsstudyc.org.hk/info.html>. Accessed 13 May 2007.

## Estimated Statistics for the Catholic Church in China, 2007<sup>2</sup>

<b>Number of Catholics:</b>	
Official number (Catholics belonging to the Open Church)	53,000,000
Total number (Open Church + Underground Church)	About 12,000,000
<b>Number of Dioceses:</b>	
	138 (116 active + 22 inactive)
Official number : (following the civil boundaries)	97
<b>Number of Bishops:</b>	
In the Open Church	62
In the Underground Church	41
<b>Number of Priests:</b>	
In the Open Church	100 (old), 1,800 (young)
In the Underground Church	100 (old), 1,100 (young)
<b>Number of Nuns:</b>	
In the Open Church	3,430
In the Underground Church	1,220
<b>Number of Seminaries:</b>	
Major	14
Minor	18
Underground	10
<b>Number of Seminarians:</b>	
In the Open Church	652
In the Underground Church	about 350
Minor seminarians in the Open Church	530
<b>Number of Novitiates:</b>	
In the Open Church	40
In the Underground Church	20
<b>Number of Nuns in Formation:</b>	
In the Open Church	330
In the Underground Church	230

<sup>2</sup> Holy Spirit Study Centre, "Estimated Statistics for Chinese Catholics, 2007", [http://www.hsstudyc.org.hk/en/china/en\\_cinfo\\_china\\_stat07.html](http://www.hsstudyc.org.hk/en/china/en_cinfo_china_stat07.html). Accessed 10 March 2008.

## **- Chapter IV -**

### ***Benedict XVI's Letter to Chinese Catholics: a Vision for Future Relations with China***

#### ***Introduction***

The previous chapters explained the unique position that the Holy See enjoys in the international system, clarified the distinction between it and the Vatican City State and examined the long and complex history of the relations between the Holy See and China. The subject of the current chapter, the letter of Benedict XVI to the Chinese Catholics, shifts the focus to the analysis of contemporary developments and options. The Papal letter, in fact, should be considered a watershed between the past and the future of Holy See-China relations; between the XX century Holy See's *Sinopolitik* and the line for a new century. At the same time, the approach of Benedict XVI to China - as outlined in his message - falls within the sign of continuity with the vision of John Paul II. The German Pope seems to be following the intuition that dominated his predecessor when he often repeated that "Asia is our common task for the Third Millennium."<sup>1</sup> The letter represents a new pillar of the solid bridge that the Church is building to the most populous Asian nation. From now onwards, every study on the relations between the Holy See and China will undoubtedly give the utmost attention to such a pivotal document. Indeed,

---

<sup>1</sup> John Paul II as quoted in Marco Tosatti, "By Small Steps", *30Days*, January/February 2006, <http://www.30giorni.it/us/articolo.asp?id=10118>. Accessed 31 March 2007.

analyzing the letter is essential for developing an understanding of the future dynamics of Holy See-China relations. In this chapter, the analysis of the Papal message will start by individuating and investigating the four major political-diplomatic issues addressed by Benedict XVI. Subsequently, the chapter will emphasize the differences and the similarities between the reaction of the Chinese leadership and that of the bureaucracy in charge of religious affairs. Then, the analysis will examine the prudent comments of the Apostolic See on the ambiguous Chinese response to the Papal message, maintaining that the *Palazzo Apostolico*<sup>2</sup> is now patiently - but not inactively - waiting for a more articulated and encouraging response from the Chinese authorities.

### *Benedict XVI's Letter*

On 30 June 2007, the *Letter of the Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI to the Bishops, Priests, Consecrated Persons and Lay Faithful of the Catholic Church in the People's Republic of China* was finally published. The Letter is symbolically dated May 27, Feast of Pentecost, and has been issued in two Chinese versions - traditional and simplified - as well as in French, English and Italian. The document, fifty-four pages in the English version, is divided into two parts: 'The Situation of the Church, Theological Aspects' and 'Guidelines for Pastoral Life', *plus* a conclusion. As a gesture of respect and diplomatic courtesy, it was shown to the PRC authorities some days before its publication.<sup>3</sup> The letter, remarkable for its

---

<sup>2</sup> The Apostolic Palace - in Italian, *Palazzo Apostolico* - is the official residence of the Pope in the Vatican City. It is also called the Papal Palace or the Palace of the Vatican.

<sup>3</sup> Sandro Magister, "The Pope Writes, but the Beijing Authorities Don't Respond", *www.chiesa*, 23 July 2007, <http://chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it/dettaglio.jsp?id=157081&eng=y>. Accessed 1 August 2007.

content as well as for its elegant clarity, touches upon every aspect of the Church's life in China and its society. Under the political-diplomatic aspect, the Papal message places particular emphasis on four themes regarding the Catholic Church in China and the problematic relations with the PRC government: the unity of the Chinese Catholics; the aims of the Catholic Church in China and Holy See's desire to open negotiations with Beijing; the appointment of bishops; the CPCA.

Benedict XVI's profound concern for the unity of the Chinese flock is perhaps the central theme of the letter. Unity, together with reconciliation and dialogue, is the key word of the document. From the outset, the Pope praises the fidelity of many "witnesses of the faith"<sup>4</sup> and, recalling their grave sufferings, he even uses the word 'persecution'. However, albeit paying homage to the loyalty of the 'clandestine' Catholics, the Pope urges the Chinese Church as a whole to overcome "tensions, divisions and recriminations",<sup>5</sup> and to practise pardon and seek reconciliation. In the document, in fact, the Pope does not use the expressions 'official Church' and 'underground Church', but speaks only of the 'Church in China'. Moreover, Benedict XVI reveals that he considers himself personally committed to pursuing the unity of the Chinese Catholics: "I sense the urgent need, as my deep and compelling duty and as an expression of my paternal love, to favor their unity with the means proper to the Church."<sup>6</sup> For the sake of unity, in an unprecedented gesture, the head of the Catholic Church even revokes regulations which had called for limiting contact with China's official clergy.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> Benedict XVI, *Letter of the Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI to the Bishops, Priests, Consecrated Persons and Lay Faithful of the Catholic Church in the People's Republic of China*.

<sup>5</sup> Ibidem

<sup>6</sup> Ibidem

<sup>7</sup> Nicole Winfield, "Pope tells Chinese Catholics to unite", *Associated Press*, 1 July 2007, [http://www2.ljworld.com/news/2007/jul/01/pope\\_tells\\_chinese\\_catholics\\_unite](http://www2.ljworld.com/news/2007/jul/01/pope_tells_chinese_catholics_unite). Accessed 3 July 2007.

The unity of the Chinese Church, though, is not only a matter of pastoral care for the Pope. The Roman Pontiff knows only too well that it is the essential prerequisite in dealing with the Chinese from a position of relative strength. Only with a united and loyal Chinese Church can the Holy See hope to successfully negotiate with Beijing to win over religious freedom on its own terms and ultimately establish diplomatic relations with the PRC. The strategy of the Apostolic See is fathomable: by pursuing and eventually achieving the loyalty of all Chinese Catholics - clergy and lay people - both 'clandestine' and 'official', Rome hopes to compel the Communist Party to face the ultimate failure of its pluridecennial policy of setting up a parallel Chinese Church and thus come to the negotiating table. Certainly, such a strategy would be more likely to succeed if the Holy See reconciles also with the small, but intransigent, group of Chinese clerics that still refuse allegiance to the Bishop of Rome. In addition, there is an actual risk that the adoption of this strategy might lead to a temporary heterogenesis of ends: in the short term, it is likely to provoke an hardening of the repressive control by the government - fearful of losing its grip on the 'official' Church - over Catholics in general, and clandestine Catholics in particular. This is probably one of the reasons that the letter fosters unity in fidelity of all to Rome but, *possibly*, in accord with the state authorities.

The document also displays the desire to hold out an olive branch to Beijing and allay the fears of Chinese Communist leaders - determined to retain the monopoly of political power - about the real intentions of the Catholic Church. Although Benedict XVI is not silent about the oppression of the clandestine faithful, the tone of his letter is always conciliatory towards the PRC government and appreciative of the Chinese nation. In fact, the letter begins with words of praise for what China



has achieved, speaking of “significant goals of socio-economic progress” and of “far-sighted planning” and expresses “sincere admiration and sentiments of friendship”<sup>8</sup> for the Chinese people. Then, addressing himself directly to the Chinese government, Benedict XVI deplores the burdensome “situation of misunderstandings and incomprehension” which, he stresses, serves the interests of neither side, states that “the political community and the Church are autonomous and independent of each other in their own fields,”<sup>9</sup> and explicitly reassures Beijing on a particularly sensitive issue: “the Catholic Church which is in China does not have a mission to change the structure or administration of the State; rather, her mission is to proclaim Christ to men and women.”<sup>10</sup> Pope Benedict also highlights that the Roman Pontiff is not “a political authority, unduly asserting itself in the internal affairs of a State and offending against its sovereignty”<sup>11</sup> and, in dealing with the question of relations between Church and State, recalls the evangelical principle of ‘rendering unto Caesar what is Caesar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s’. On such a basis, Benedict XVI expresses his hope for the opening of “some form of dialogue”<sup>12</sup> between the Holy See and the PRC authorities. Once, the Roman Pontiff writes, the misunderstandings of the past have been overcome, such a dialogue would make it possible for the two parts to “work together for the good of the Chinese people and for peace in the world.”<sup>13</sup> The Pope, however, tempers his idealist statements by declaring his awareness that the normalization of relations with the PRC requires time and necessarily presupposes “the good will of

---

<sup>8</sup> Benedict XVI, *Letter of the Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI to the Bishops, Priests, Consecrated Persons and Lay Faithful of the Catholic Church in the People’s Republic of China*.

<sup>9</sup> Benedict XVI quotes an important document of the Second Vatican Council, the ‘Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World - Gaudium et Spes’.

<sup>10</sup> Benedict XVI, *Letter of the Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI to the Bishops, Priests, Consecrated Persons and Lay Faithful of the Catholic Church in the People’s Republic of China*.

<sup>11</sup> Ibidem

<sup>12</sup> Ibidem

<sup>13</sup> Ibidem

both parties.”<sup>14</sup> On this last point, he reaffirms that the Holy See always remains open to negotiations.

Like his predecessor, Benedict XVI tries to persuade the Chinese leaders that the Catholic Church (and Catholicism) does not pose a threat to the basis of the Chinese state system. Unlike his predecessor, he probably sounds more credible to the Chinese. Unlike John Paul II, in fact, Benedict XVI does not bear a profoundly anti-communist stigma. The German Pope is certainly seen as a conservative, but this is not necessarily a minus from the Chinese point of view. After all, although Richard Nixon was a ‘rightist’, China’s leaders had little trouble reaching profound agreements with him. On the other hand, Benedict XVI spells out the mission of the Roman Apostolic Church: the proclamation of the Gospel. On this mandate, the enactment of which according to Rome requires actual religious freedom, the Holy See can discuss but not compromise. Therein lies the continuity with the previous pontificate. The words of Benedict XVI, although in a less emphatic key, echo the memorable appeal which inaugurated the pontificate of John Paul II: “throw open the door to Christ!”<sup>15</sup> The message is the same, only the style differs.

Richard Madsen, an expert on Chinese Catholic affairs argues: “The big issue for normalizing relations between the Vatican and the Chinese Government has to do with who gets control of the appointment of bishops.”<sup>16</sup> As previously explained, the greatest single impediment to the normalization of relations is the demand that

---

<sup>14</sup> Ibidem

<sup>15</sup> John Paul II as quoted in John Magee, “A Man for All Seasons”, *Diocese of Cloyne Bulletin*, 16 October 2003, [www.cloynediocese.ie/John%20Paul%20II.htm](http://www.cloynediocese.ie/John%20Paul%20II.htm). Accessed 14 May 2007.

<sup>16</sup> Richard Madsen, “The Chinese Catholic Church as Part of Civil Society”, *U.S. Catholic China Bureau Resources*, 17 September 2004, <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/roundtables/091704/madsen.php?PHPSESSID=a6fcdc1627ac5864bd77e8ba4c8d72c8>. Accessed 10 April 2007.

the Holy See recognizes Beijing as being the sole entity responsible for naming bishops in China. As explained beforehand, the Chinese present this demand under the euphemistic formula of ‘non-interference in China’s internal affairs in the name of religion’. In other words, the government requires the Holy See to surrender its right to appoint bishops in China, in order to have politically sanctioned Catholic bishops, whose loyalty would primarily be to the state rather than to Peter’s successor, and who would - by default - have to be recognized by Rome. For the Holy See, bending to this demand would mean ceding one of its most sacred prerogatives, one of the things the Catholic Church “cannot renounce while remaining loyal to herself.”<sup>17</sup> This question, in fact, touches the very heart of the life of the Church, for it pertains to the unity of the Church and its hierarchical communion.<sup>18</sup> For this reason Rome regards the right of appointing bishops as the litmus test of religious freedom for the Church in China. Therefore, the condition posed by Beijing is considered wholly unacceptable in the Apostolic Palace.

Although ceding the prerogative of episcopal appointment is out of question, in his letter Benedict XVI offers the Chinese leaders to negotiate an agreeable procedure for the issue of bishop nominations. After pointing out that “The Holy See would desire to be completely free to appoint Bishops,” the Pope adds: “considering the recent particular developments of the Church in China, I trust that an accord can be reached with the Government so as to resolve certain questions regarding the choice of candidates for the episcopate, the publication of the appointment of Bishops, and the recognition - concerning civil effects where necessary - of the

---

<sup>17</sup> Giovanni Lajolo as quoted in Sandro Magister, “The Vatican’s New Policy on China Has a Color: Cardinal Red”.

<sup>18</sup> Peter Barry, “A Commentary on the Letter of Pope Benedict XVI to the Catholics of China”, *Holy Spirit Study Centre*, 4 July 2007, [www.hsstudyc.org.hk/en/remarks/en\\_err\\_20070704.html](http://www.hsstudyc.org.hk/en/remarks/en_err_20070704.html). Accessed 10 July 2007.

new Bishops on the part of the civil authorities.”<sup>19</sup> The history of the Catholic Church presents significant cases of exception to the principle of free Papal choice, in the form of variations in the procedure adopted for the appointment of bishops. These exceptions are due to historical and legal reasons or to particular conditions regarding the local Church. Generally, the rationale of the exceptions is that the Roman Pontiff acknowledges that the naming of bishops “may be of legitimate concern to the secular authorities”<sup>20</sup>, thus he *concedes* the latter to have a say in it. The above mentioned passage of the Papal letter is, then, a diplomatic overture as well as an invitation to the Chinese leaders to be realistic and not to ask the impossible, but seek a compromise solution in the name of pragmatism and flexibility.

In order to prompt the Chinese to negotiate, Benedict XVI has decided to rectify one of the aforementioned exceptions. Notably, the exception regards China. At the end of the letter, the Pope announces the revocation of the ‘special faculties’ granted to Chinese bishops loyal to Rome during “truly difficult times”<sup>21</sup> - namely the authority of choosing and consecrating new bishops. The Pope explains he reached such a decision “considering in the first place some positive developments of the situation of the Church in China, and in the second place the increased opportunities and greater ease in communication, and finally the request sent to Rome by various Bishops and priests.”<sup>22</sup> The Papal decision lends itself to a double interpretation. On the one hand, it is clearly meant to be a gesture of goodwill, made to encourage Beijing to take a step forward. On the other hand, although the

---

<sup>19</sup> Benedict XVI, *Letter of the Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI to the Bishops, Priests, Consecrated Persons and Lay Faithful of the Catholic Church in the People's Republic of China*.

<sup>20</sup> Gerald Chan, “Sino-Vatican Diplomatic Relations: Problems and Prospects”, p. 15.

<sup>21</sup> Benedict XVI, *Letter of the Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI to the Bishops, Priests, Consecrated Persons and Lay Faithful of the Catholic Church in the People's Republic of China*.

<sup>22</sup> Ibidem

Pope - by recognizing that the situation of the Chinese Catholics has altogether improved - admits that the Chinese rulers have been more tolerant in the last two decades, he *also* signals to the government that today the Church in China is united and organized to the degree that emergency measures - like the assignation of special prerogatives to the 'underground' bishops - are not necessary any more.

If the letter widely deals with one of the two proclaimed impasses of relations with Beijing, the external 'interference' in Chinese affairs, it omits to mention the other issue that the PRC considers crucial, that of relations with Taiwan. However, this blank spot has been filled by a note from the Holy See Press Office, entitled *Certain Highlights*, which states that "as has been said in other circumstances, if an agreement is reached with the Government, the transfer to Beijing of the Holy See's nunciature can take place at any time."<sup>23</sup> The omission in the letter and the relegation of the Taiwan issue into the Press Office note are of great significance. The Pope intends to convey to the PRC government that, as far as the Holy See is concerned, the Taiwan problem is a 'peripheral question', destined to be rapidly solved once the Gordian knot of the episcopal appointments is untied. In substance, the note is a reminder that China's diplomatic gain is Taiwan's loss. Considering the international stature of the Apostolic See, it is widely agreed that if the Holy See shifts recognition to Beijing, the international legitimacy and credibility of Taipei would be gravely undermined.<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup> Holy See Press Office as quoted in *Spero News*, "Benedict and his love letter to the Chinese", 30 June 2007, <http://www.speroforum.com/site/article.asp?idarticle=10143&t=Benedict+and+his+love+letter+to+t+he+Chinese>. Accessed 5 July 2007.

<sup>24</sup> Frank Ching, "Sino-Vatican Relations after Pope John Paul II".

In his letter, Benedict XVI unequivocally condemns the CPCA. Although it is explicitly mentioned only in footnote 36, the CPCA is easily identifiable as one of those “entities, desired by the State and extraneous to the structure of the Church,” which placed “themselves above the Bishops [...] to guide the life of the ecclesial community.”<sup>25</sup> Similarly, the Pope clearly refers to the CPCA when he writes of “persons who are not ‘ordained’, and sometimes not even baptized,” and who “control and take decisions concerning important ecclesial questions, including the appointment of Bishops, in the name of various State agencies.”<sup>26</sup> Benedict XVI rejects the CPCA and like organizations by stating that “the declared purpose of the afore-mentioned entities to implement ‘the principles of independence and autonomy, self-management and democratic administration of the Church’ is incompatible with Catholic doctrine, which from the time of the ancient creeds professes the Church to be ‘one, holy, catholic and apostolic’.”<sup>27</sup> A few lines below, the Pope reinforces his reprobation: “Communion and unity [...] are essential and integral elements of the Catholic Church: therefore the proposal for a Church that is ‘independent’ of the Holy See, in the religious sphere, is incompatible with Catholic doctrine.”<sup>28</sup>

From the Papal point of view, the interference of the CPCA in Chinese ecclesial life is in the first place doctrinal and only subsequently political. Therefore, the Pope’s condemnation, even prior to being politically motivated, is theologically founded on the notions of hierarchy, communion and Petrine primacy.<sup>29</sup> By

---

<sup>25</sup> Benedict XVI, *Letter of the Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI to the Bishops, Priests, Consecrated Persons and Lay Faithful of the Catholic Church in the People’s Republic of China*.

<sup>26</sup> Ibidem

<sup>27</sup> Ibidem

<sup>28</sup> Ibidem

<sup>29</sup> Bernardo Cervellera, “The Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association celebrates 50 years at a less than ideal moment”, *Asianews.it*, 25 July 2007, <http://www.asianews.it/index.php?l=en&art=9915&theme=2&size=A>. Accessed 26 July 2007.

condemning the CPCA, the Roman Pontiff indirectly but unequivocally reaffirms his rejection of the whole 'independent' Church policy as doctrinally unacceptable. Notably, the Pope does not oppose in principle the recognition of Catholic Church institutions by the civil authorities, but it should "not entail the denial of unrenounceable principles of faith and of ecclesiastical communion."<sup>30</sup> At a diplomatic level, the Pope's message is that the activities and - probably - the very existence of the CPCA, not the mutual recognition between Church and State, are regarded as a massive obstacle on the road to dialogue. While the Pope is determined to conduct dialogue with the Chinese Government, he seems equally determined not to give quarter to the CPCA, whose policy of suffocating control of Catholic Church activities has extremely irritated Rome. It is, then, plausible supposing that - during negotiations or once established relations - the Pontifical diplomats are going to demand the dismantlement or, at least, the neutralization of a body that the Holy See regards as incompatible with the apostolate of the Church in China. In this, the Vatican might be helped by the diminishing effectiveness of the CPCA. This bureaucratic entity appears less and less capable of guaranteeing the political control and the ideological orthodoxy of the state-sanctioned Church. To come around to the validity of this assertion, it is sufficient to remember that the large majority of the 'official' bishops are now 'in communion' with the Pope. For this reason, it is even possible that Chinese leaders might, in the future, come to the conclusion that the CPCA has become obsolete and accept its sacrifice on the negotiation table.

---

<sup>30</sup> Benedict XVI, *Letter of the Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI to the Bishops, Priests, Consecrated Persons and Lay Faithful of the Catholic Church in the People's Republic of China*.

### *The Chinese Reactions to the Papal Letter*

Catholic Sinologist, Fr Jeroom Heyndrickx, defined the pastoral letter of Benedict XVI - together with the letter written by John Paul II in 2003 - as “the most important and historical document ever written by Rome to the Chinese Church.”<sup>31</sup> Fr Bernardo Cervellera, a prominent expert on the Church in China, wrote that, with his letter, the Pope “launches the Church and society in China into the third millennium.”<sup>32</sup> Italian Jesuit Federico Lombardi, director of the Holy See Press Office, declared that the Papal letter “is a sign of a new beginning.”<sup>33</sup> Indeed, the scope, depth of focus and length of the letter to Catholics in China suggest that, by issuing this document, the Pope intended to set the doctrinal, diplomatic and political line towards China well into the future of his pontificate. He has done this according to his style and background: the tone and the words he employs to engage his interlocutors are never imperative but rather caring and concerned. Especially when addressing the Chinese authorities, Benedict XVI - a soft-spoken fine theologian who highly values the power of rational argument - gives the impression of aiming at *convincing* them to start a productive dialogue rather than enticing them to negotiate. Furthermore, the Roman Pontiff sounds fully aware that even his pastoral directives have, inevitably, a political reverberation. Fr Lombardi said that the letter “could not have been more clear, nor better expressed in the framework of a profound presentation of the nature and mission of the Church.”<sup>34</sup>

---

<sup>31</sup> Jeroom Heyndrickx, “Pastoral directives of Pope Benedict XVI for China”, *The Atlantic*, 12 July 2007, <http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200707u/pope-letter>. Accessed 20 July 2007.

<sup>32</sup> Bernardo Cervellera, “Pope’s letter: for truth and love of the Church and China”, *Asianews.it*, 30 June 2007, <http://www.asianews.it/index.php?l=en&art=9694>. Accessed 1 July 2007.

<sup>33</sup> Federico Lombardi as quoted in *EWTN*, “China Letter a New Beginning, Says Aide”, 10 July 2007, [www.eternalworldtelevision.com/vnews/getstory\\_print.asp?number=80673](http://www.eternalworldtelevision.com/vnews/getstory_print.asp?number=80673). Accessed 13 July 2007.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibidem*



This is perhaps not the most impartial of opinions, but it effectively describes the effort of conceptual clarification which informs the whole Papal message.

Apparently, views over the 'Vatican issue' among the Chinese leadership - who, at least at a declaratory level, show a more conciliatory line towards the Holy See<sup>35</sup> - and sectors of the Communist Party mid-level apparatus, are not identical.<sup>36</sup> Predictably, the response of the latter has been prompt and hostile. On 28 and 29 June 2007, on the eve of the publication of the Pope's letter, the United Front summoned near the capital numerous 'official' bishops, for a session of political indoctrination aimed at making them introject the principle that the Chinese Church must be national and independent from Rome. Ye Xiaowen, director of the State Administration for Religious Affairs, attended the meeting. Reportedly, he said to the participants that: "We have served you with *maotai*, the best liquor in China. After drinking it, you no longer need foreign wine."<sup>37</sup> This metaphor leaves no doubt on the Party's intention of pursuing the objective of an independent Chinese Catholic Church. In addition, on July 5, the Hong Kong newspaper *Wen Wei Po*, which voices the Party position, maintained that the Pope's pastoral letter has

---

<sup>35</sup> However, on several occasions the Chinese government has taken a stand as much uncompromising as the CPCA's. For example, in the aftermath of the 'illicit' episcopal ordinations in April-May 2006, the government demanded Rome to respect the state-sanctioned church's authority. A statement released by the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs read: "The recent ordination of bishops at some diocese have been unanimously well-received by church members and priests, [...] The criticism toward the Chinese side by the Vatican is groundless. [...] We hope the Vatican can respect the will of the Chinese church and the vast numbers of its priests and church members so as to create a good atmosphere for the improvement of Sino-Vatican ties." (Foreign Ministry of the People's Republic of China as quoted in Alexa Olesen, "China's Church Defies Vatican Objections").

<sup>36</sup> Edward Cody, "China Consecrates 2nd Bishop Without Approval of the Pope", *Washington Post*, 4 May 2006, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/05/03/AR2006050300692.html>. Accessed 11 May 2007. In particular, the bureaucrats in charge of religious affairs seem to be very intransigent.

<sup>37</sup> Ye Xiaowen as quoted in *UCAN News*, "'Open' bishops instructed to keep calm no matter what papal letter on China says", 29 July 2007, [http://www.catholic.org/international/international\\_story.php?id=24567](http://www.catholic.org/international/international_story.php?id=24567). Accessed 1 August 2008.

created new barriers for further dialogue between China and the Vatican<sup>38</sup> and announced that new 'official' bishops will be installed in the next few months, without and against the Pontifical approval, in the dioceses of Guangzhou, Guizhou, Hubei, and Ningxia.<sup>39</sup>

Equally, the reaction of the CPCA, although formally positive at first, has *de facto* been unfriendly. The day after the publication of the letter, Liu Bainian, deputy chairman of the CPCA, declared: "The Pope, through his letter has expressed his love and concern for China's believers [...] This is different from earlier papal letters [...] Earlier papal letters were opposed to communism and the socialist system. They wanted to punish members of China's patriotic church. Now the situation is not the same. The Pope wants to better understand China's Church."<sup>40</sup> Two days later, he reneged on the hopes he had raised by affirming that: "We ordain bishops only for the sake of evangelization in the mainland. Nobody can stop us."<sup>41</sup> On 24 July, in an interview to the Italian daily *La Repubblica*, Liu Bainian surprisingly went as far as to augur a visit of the Roman Pontiff to the PRC: "I hope with all my strength to be able to see the Pope one day here in Beijing, celebrating Mass for us Chinese."<sup>42</sup> After a few days, however, Liu claimed that his words were taken out of context and 'clarified' his previous statement by saying to the China Daily that before a papal visit can eventuate, "the Vatican must sever

---

<sup>38</sup> The Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesman, asked about it by a journalist, tersely dismissed the issue by saying: "China has made its position clear. I have no more to say." (Qin Gang as quoted in Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, "Foreign Ministry Spokesman Qin Gang's Regular Press Conference on 5 July 2007", <http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/fyrth/t337529.htm>. Accessed 19 July 2007).

<sup>39</sup> Sandro Magister, "The Pope Writes, but the Beijing Authorities Don't Respond".

<sup>40</sup> Anthony Liu Bainian as quoted in *Catholic News*, "Benedict's letter 'different': Chinese church leader", 3 July 2007, <http://www.cathnews.com/news/707/11.php>. Accessed 4 July 2007.

<sup>41</sup> Anthony Liu Bainian as quoted in *Catholic News*, "China church will continue to 'self-ordain' bishops without approval of pope, says gov't association leader", 5 July 2007, [http://www.catholic.org/international/international\\_story.php?id=24611](http://www.catholic.org/international/international_story.php?id=24611). Accessed 6 July 2007.

<sup>42</sup> Anthony Liu Bainian as quoted in *Adnkronos*, "Vatican-China: 'Hope to see Pope in Beijing', state church leader says", 24 July 2007, [www.adnkronos.com/AKI/English/Religion/?id=1.0.1135140517](http://www.adnkronos.com/AKI/English/Religion/?id=1.0.1135140517). Accessed 26 July 2007.

diplomatic relations with Taiwan and stop interfering in China's internal affairs if it wants to normalize ties with Beijing.”<sup>43</sup> Actually, double-think and incoherence seem to be a distinguishing feature of Liu Bainian. In an interview prior to the publication of the Papal letter, the CPCA vice-head, announced that his organization would not distribute the document among the faithful,<sup>44</sup> given that “it could be easily downloaded from the Internet.”<sup>45</sup> Unfortunately, Benedict XVI's message soon disappeared from Chinese websites which featured it after its publication. Numerous Chinese priests and lay people who manage the portals revealed that they were visited by government officials who forced them to remove the document. Meanwhile, in China it became very difficult to open the official website of the Holy See.<sup>46</sup>

The response of the highest Chinese political authorities, all things considered, has been algid, low-key, prudent, but not as unfriendly as the reaction of the bureaucratic apparatus. The very day of the publication of the Papal letter, Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Qin Gang, commented on it in this way: “We have taken note of the letter released by the Pope. China has always stood for the improvement of China-Vatican relationship and made positive efforts for that. China is willing to continue candid and constructive dialogue with Vatican so as to resolve our differences. China's stance on improving China-Vatican ties is persistent, that is, Vatican must sever its so-called diplomatic ties with Taiwan and recognize the People's Republic of China as the sole legitimate government

---

<sup>43</sup> Anthony Liu Bainian as quoted in *Spero News*, “China to Pope: Kow tow”, 26 July 2007, <http://www.speroforum.com/site/article.asp?idarticle=10448&t=China+to+Pope%3A+Kow+tow>. Accessed 27 July 2007.

<sup>44</sup> It would be difficult for the Church to do it on its own because religious publications need government authorisation.

<sup>45</sup> Anthony Liu Bainian as quoted in *Asianews.it*, “Beijing removes Papal letter to Chinese Church”, 3 July 2007, [www.asianews.it/index.php?l=en&art=9711](http://www.asianews.it/index.php?l=en&art=9711). 4 July 2007.

<sup>46</sup> *Asianews.it*, “Beijing removes Papal letter to Chinese Church”.

representing the whole of China, and shall never interfere in China's internal affairs, including in the name of religion. We hope the Vatican side takes concrete actions and does not create new barriers."<sup>47</sup>

This statement in itself could be seen as a sign of modest progress. In the past, the Chinese government's reactions to Rome's initiatives were much harsher. However, leaving aside the declarations of past and present goodwill, there are two elements which mark the continuity with the traditional *Vatikanpolitik* of the PRC government. Firstly, there is a semantic factor which reveals the current leadership's adherence to the long-established line towards the Holy See. In the press release, the Holy See is identified as 'Vatican'. 'Vatican' appears not to be used as a term of convenience for 'Holy See', but rather as a lexical way to make a political-diplomatic statement. In other words, the denotation has profound connotations. The Chinese, in fact, have always eschewed the term 'Holy See' in their official statements and documents. The reason for this semantic choice is adamantly explained in the white paper on religious freedom, entitled *Freedom of Religious Belief in China*, issued by the PRC State's Council in 1997. This document states: "the relationship between China and the Vatican is one between two countries."<sup>48</sup> The white paper clearly explicates the PRC's intention to recognize the Holy See solely in terms of its territorial expression, the VCS, thus denying the *sui generis*, unique position that the Holy See - as the supreme government of the Catholic Church - enjoys in the international community: a position that is the very *raison d'être* of its international subjectivity. The

---

<sup>47</sup> Qin Gang as quoted in Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Qin Gang's remarks on the Pope's letter to Chinese Catholics on 30 June 2007, <http://www.chineseembassy.org/eng/xwfw/s2510/t335525.htm>. Accessed 3 July 2007.

<sup>48</sup> State Administration for Religious Affairs of the People's Republic of China, *Freedom of Religious Belief*.

employment of the term 'Vatican' therefore implies the denial of the religious-transnational dimension of the Holy See and thus its right to be an international subject independently from its exercise of temporal sovereignty.

Secondly, Qin Gang reiterated the two conditions demanded by the Chinese government for re-establishing diplomatic ties. This is a strong signal that Beijing will remain inflexible and uncompromising on its terms for the normalization of relations with Rome. From the Chinese viewpoint, the Holy See should be the one to bend, not the PRC. The same concept had been reaffirmed, by the same spokesperson, even on the imminence of the publication of Benedict XVI's letter. Concluding his 19 June 2007 press conference, Qin Gang said: "We have taken note that the Pope will send a pastoral letter to Chinese Catholics. We hope the Vatican can see the fact that China advocates freedom of religious belief and the Chinese Catholic Church has been developing so as to take concrete actions to create favourable condition for the normalization of its relationship with China."<sup>49</sup> This passage of the spokesperson's statement was clearly a warning to the Apostolic See to expunge from the Papal letter any reference to persecution, harassment or even death suffered by the 'underground' Chinese Catholics.<sup>50</sup> Mr Qin added that "China's position on the relationship with the Vatican remains unchanged. China is willing to actively explore the approaches to improve the bilateral relationship through continuous constructive dialogue based on the two

---

<sup>49</sup> Qin Gang as quoted in Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, "Foreign Ministry Spokesman Qin Gang's Regular Press Conference on 19 June, 2007", <http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/fyrth/t331911.htm>. Accessed 2 June 2007.

<sup>50</sup> The precise date of the handing of a copy of the Pope's letter to the PRC authorities is unknown. Different sources report different dates: three days, ten days or even two weeks before the publishing. In the first two cases, Beijing was only supposing that the Papal letter was going to mention the repression of the 'underground' Catholics. In the third case, instead, the Chinese had the certainty that the draft of the letter referred to the suffering of the 'unofficial' Catholics (confidential source sighted by Professor Richard Herr).

principles on China-Vatican relations.”<sup>51</sup> The 19 June statement thus reveals a ‘big stick and small carrot’ approach by the PRC authorities. The not-too-veiled request to pass over in silence the persecution of the non-official Catholics, the restatement of the two conditions for relations and the remark that the PRC’s position has not changed can be seen as the big stick. The small carrot is represented by the assurance that China wants to seek constructive dialogue. In his message, the Pope neither omitted to mention the sufferings of the Chinese faithful nor accepted the conditions posed by Beijing. Evidently, neither the warnings nor the enticements of the Chinese government have convinced the Holy See.

### *The Holy See’s Cautious Comments on the Chinese Reactions*

Altogether, it can be maintained that, apart from the ritual re-proposal to the Holy See of the two conditions and formal assurances of sincere goodwill, the Chinese government did not issue a proper response on the merits of the Papal letter. The reservation of the Chinese authorities was judged in the Vatican as a positive reality. The Secretary of State, Cardinal Bertone, explained the laconic nature of the government’s response, by hypothesizing a “moment of thought and reflection.”<sup>52</sup> Bertone said: “There are no official reactions at this time; we believe the government is prudently reflecting on it and this is a positive development,”<sup>53</sup> and highlighted that “the letter initiated a dialogue between the official Church and

---

<sup>51</sup> Qin Gang as quoted in Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, “Foreign Ministry Spokesman Qin Gang’s Regular Press Conference on 19 June, 2007”.

<sup>52</sup> Tarcisio Bertone as quoted in *Asianews.it*, “Liu Bainian goes back on his invitation to Pope, and the government talks of ‘changing times’”, 26 July 2007, [www.asianews.it/index.php?l=en&art=9931&theme=2&size=A](http://www.asianews.it/index.php?l=en&art=9931&theme=2&size=A). Accessed 27 July 2007.

<sup>53</sup> Tarcisio Bertone as quoted in *Zenit*, “Cardinal Bertone Welcomes Choice of a ‘Well-Suited’ Person”, 19 July 2007, <http://www.zenit.org/article-20171?l=english>. Accessed 24 July 2007.

the underground one.”<sup>54</sup> The Holy See spokesman, Fr Lombardi, stated that the effects of the Papal message would be seen in time, signalling that Rome was not expecting an immediate reply. The Holy See has therefore chosen, at the mediatic level, to adopt a ‘no answer, good answer’ attitude; that is, to see the Chinese glass as half full. The Apostolic Palace officials are anything but naïve, so it is probable that the publicly optimistic stance of the Holy See, rather than being inspired only by Christian optimism, is fundamentally a calculated position aimed at inducing the Chinese to negotiate.

From this perspective, even the appointment on 16 July 2007 of the first bishop elected in China, after the publication of the Pope’s letter and according to ‘official’ Church procedures, was regarded in the Vatican not as a slight but as a good sign. Certainly, the personal qualities and background of the pre-selected candidate counted in his favour. Joseph Li Shan, the new Archbishop-elect of Beijing, is in fact from a strongly Catholic family, highly thought of by the faithful who had him as a pastor in the commercial district of Wangfujin,<sup>55</sup> and, most importantly of all, a man who - although being an ‘official’ cleric - has stood bravely against the power of the CPCA. He is thus considered totally the opposite of his predecessor, Michael Fu Tieshan, the champion of independence from the Holy See, a bishop who never reconciled with the Roman Pontiff. Moreover, according to Chinese Catholic sources mentioned by *Asianews*, the name of Li Shan was among those put forward for the post of Beijing Archbishop who did not evoke objections in Rome, even in the absence of an accord.<sup>56</sup> Notably, from the Chinese authorities’ viewpoint, Li Shan has the advantage of not being

---

<sup>54</sup> Ibidem

<sup>55</sup> Sandro Magister, “The Pope Writes, but the Beijing Authorities Don’t Respond”.

<sup>56</sup> *Asianews.it*, “The new Bishop of Beijing is elected”, 18 July 2007, <http://www.asianews.it/index.php?l=en&art=9856&size=A>. Accessed 19 July 2007.

‘Westernised’, given that he has never travelled abroad, not even for study. The Holy See at first limited itself to following the situation ‘with great attention’<sup>57</sup>, but on July 20 Cardinal Bertone described the new bishop-elect as “a very good and suitable person.”<sup>58</sup> And he added: “the election took place according to the canons of the official Church, and now we are waiting for the bishop-elect to ask for the approval of the Holy See. We are optimistic.”<sup>59</sup> The fact that Rome, in striking contrast with its harsh response to the ‘patriotic’ episcopal appointments and consecrations of 2006, decided to salute enthusiastically the election of Li Shan represents an *overture eclatant* and, substantially, another tactical move in the Holy See’s charm offensive.<sup>60</sup> It is true that the Secretary of State restated that the election occurred following an illicit (albeit valid) procedure. He could not have done otherwise. But it is equally true that, by praising Li Shan, inviting him to seek the Pontifical sanction and declaring his optimism, Bertone conveyed an important message to his counterpart. He wanted the Chinese to know that the Holy See considered the election of Li Shan as a step in the right direction: the choice of candidates endorsed by both parts could mark the beginning of a constructive dialogue towards a mutually agreeable procedure for the appointment and the ordination of bishops.

Four days after Bertone’s statement, on 24 July, three ‘underground’ priests from the Hebei province, the ‘clandestine’ Catholics’ stronghold in China, were arrested by police while on mission in Inner Mongolia. At the same time, another non-

---

<sup>57</sup> Ibidem

<sup>58</sup> Tarcisio Bertone as quoted in Sandro Magister, “The Pope Writes, but the Beijing Authorities Don’t Respond”.

<sup>59</sup> Ibidem

<sup>60</sup> Lo Svizzero, “La ‘ostpolitik’ di Ratzinger verso Mosca e Pechino. Doppio scacco matto”, *Opinione*, 29 September 2007, [www.opinione.it/pages.php?dir=naz&act=art&edi=209&id\\_art=6396](http://www.opinione.it/pages.php?dir=naz&act=art&edi=209&id_art=6396). Accessed 29 September 2007.



official priest was arrested in Hebei.<sup>61</sup> Furthermore, according to *Asianews* sources, some weeks before the issuing of the Papal letter the police decreed solitary confinement for several Hebei priests who had been held in labour camps, and denied any visit.<sup>62</sup> The hardening of the repression right before and soon after the publishing of Benedict XVI's letter is certainly a fact of great gravity.<sup>63</sup> However, it would be simplistic and misleading to see this series of arrests as the PRC government's definitive answer to the Pope's proffer of rapprochement.<sup>64</sup> *Prima facie*, the clamp down on the 'underground' Church could be read as a sort of 'emotional' response, almost a conditional reflex, of the Party apparatus. The establishment, scared by the prospect of having somehow to share - in force of a probable diplomatic agreement - the allegiance of a fraction of the Chinese people with a transnational religious organization, has reacted by redoubling its efforts to reduce to obedience the 'underground' segment of the Chinese Church through the re-education of the non-official clergy. A deeper analysis, however, reveals a connection between the likelihood of normalization of Holy See-China relations and of the recurrence of waves of repression against the 'clandestine' Catholics. When the possibility of a turning point in diplomatic stalemate between the Apostolic See and Beijing becomes more concrete, punctually repressive actions are carried out. This is exactly what happened in 1999,<sup>65</sup> and has apparently

---

<sup>61</sup> *Asianews.it*, "Priests arrested and put into solitary confinement: the government's answer to the Pope's Letter", 2 August 2007, <http://www.asianews.it/index.php?l=en&art=9995&size=A>. Accessed 3 August 2007.

<sup>62</sup> Until May, visits were permitted and relatives brought them food and clothing.

<sup>63</sup> *Asianews.it*, "Priests arrested and put into solitary confinement: the governments answer to the Pope's Letter".

<sup>64</sup> On 23 August, a prominent bishop of the 'underground' Church, Jia Zhiguo, was arrested in Hebei, apparently to prevent him from distributing the Pope's message to the Church in China. The 73-year-old cleric has spent more than 15 years in prison. In the past 3 years he has been arrested at least 11 times, usually to be interrogated, subjected to pressure to join the Patriotic Association, and eventually released. His last previous arrest was on June 5 of this year; he was released on 22 June (*Catholic World News Brief*, "Chinese Bishop Arrested: To Silence Pope's Message", 23 August 2007, <http://www.ewtn.com/vnews/getstory.asp?number=81588>. Accessed 26 August 2007).

<sup>65</sup> A previously mentioned secret Communist Party document issued in August 1999, when the normalization of relations seemed very likely, decreed that "whatever the future of Sino-Vatican

happened this time. Plausibly, the rationale behind the Chinese behaviour is to conduct negotiations from a vantage point that may compel Rome to accept government control over both segments of the Church in China as a *fait accompli* as well as an inescapable reality. The recent arrests of priests should therefore be seen as strategic rather than as emotionally tactical. However, given the Holy See's firm stance on actual organizational religious freedom and the majority of 'official' clergy's loyalty to the Pope, the Chinese repressive policy does not seem likely to succeed. Far from forcing the Holy See to bend, crackdowns at this stage only have the effect of spoiling any opportunity for reconciliation between the Middle Kingdom and the Apostolic See. Probably, more time is needed for a shift in the PRC attitude towards the Catholic Church to occur.

And 'to wait and let time work' seems actually to be the policy adopted by the Holy See after the issuing of the Papal letter and the Secretary of State's public praise of Li Shan. As in a chess game, Rome had made its move and now, is patiently waiting for the other player to move its pieces. Being an expert player, the Holy See maintains an impassive expression in order not to betray its emotions and keeps its eyes on the king, not on the pawns. So, when on 24 July Benedict XVI was asked by journalist on the China question - specifically about the CPCA vice-chairman's invitation to visit China - he replied very guardedly: "I cannot speak about that in this moment, it is somewhat complicated."<sup>66</sup> Three weeks later, Cardinal Bertone had been more eloquent but equally cautious when, at a press conference in the United States, he was asked about the same issue. "The situation

---

relations be" the underground Church had to be brought to obedience, through the re-education by the Patriotic Association. (*Asianews.it*, "Priests arrested and put into solitary confinement: the government's answer to the Pope's Letter").

<sup>66</sup> Benedict XVI as quoted in *EWTN*, "Benedict XVI Guarded on China Question", 25 July 2007, [www.ewtn.com/vnews/getstory.asp?number=81047](http://www.ewtn.com/vnews/getstory.asp?number=81047). Accessed 1 August 2007.

of the Church in China was presented in a very accurate way in a letter that the Holy Father wrote to the Catholic Chinese people. The areas that the Pope dealt with in that letter and the manner in which he dealt with them are the best possible way that we can address the situation in China. [...] The letter was well received and widely discussed, not only at the religious level, but on many different levels in China.”<sup>67</sup> Bertone concluded by stressing that “the letter constitutes a watershed between the past and the future in the relationship between China and the Catholic Church.”<sup>68</sup> The meaning of the Cardinal Secretary of State’s declaration seems to be that the issuing of the document *not only* marks a new beginning but, because of its clarity, it *also* makes further explanations and comments redundant. For the Holy See, the letter is self-explanatory, and it speaks for the Pope and the entire Catholic Church: no more words are then needed until the Chinese authorities issue a proper and explicit answer to the Papal epistle. While Western civilization is essentially one of *logos*, the spoken word,<sup>69</sup> the Chinese civilization is that of *wen*, the written sign.<sup>70</sup> The successor of Peter has sent a *wen* message to China. Written signs, especially ideographs, require time to read and be pondered over. For this reason, according to the Holy See, “at this time we are at a moment of reflection.”<sup>71</sup>

---

<sup>67</sup> Tarcisio Bertone as quoted in *Catholic Online*, “Cardinal Bertone’s Meeting With the Press”, 19 August 2007, <http://www.catholic.org/featured/headline.php?ID=4701&wf=rsscol>. Accessed 20 August 2007. During the press conference, Cardinal Bertone dismissed Liu Bainian’s invitation to the Pope, declaring: “With regard to the question of an ‘invitation,’ I should say that this was not done formally by the Chinese authorities. The invitation was made by an individual, in his personal capacity, and not in the name of the Chinese government.” (Tarcisio Bertone as quoted in *Catholic Online*, “Cardinal Bertone’s Meeting With the Press”).

<sup>68</sup> *Ibidem*

<sup>69</sup> The Greek term ‘logos’ is defined as logic, speech, expression, reasoning, oral communication, spoken word. (Konstantine Boudouris, *The Philosophy of Logos*, Athens, IAGP, 1996, pp. 1-2).

<sup>70</sup> Ming Dong Gu, “Reconceptualizing the Linguistic Divide: Chinese and Western Theories of the Written Sign”, *Comparative Literature Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 2, 2000, pp. 101-124.

<sup>71</sup> Tarcisio Bertone as quoted in *Catholic Online*, “Cardinal Bertone’s Meeting With the Press”.

## *Conclusion*

The Papal letter is a manifesto for Pontifical diplomacy towards the PRC. By attentively examining it, it has been possible to pick out clear lines in the Pope's *Sinopolitik*; what, in other words, is the vision that Benedict XVI has for the future of Holy See-China relations. Now, the focus of the analysis can be shifted to the two main problems that the Catholic Church is facing in pursuing diplomatic relations with the PRC. The first - factionalism on China policy - is mainly internal to the Church, but has important (and serious) implications for the Holy See's difficult dialogue with Beijing. The second issue, the conflict of authority and the clash of 'doctrines' between the Catholic Church and the CPC, is probably *the real question* in the Holy See-China interaction. In the light of the examination of the political, diplomatic and doctrinal tenets enunciated in the Papal letter, it will be easier to follow the unfolding of the analysis of the two aforementioned problems and develop a better comprehension of the negative role they play in the process of normalization of relations.

## **- Chapter V -**

### ***Factionalism on Sinopolitik: 'Party of Compromise' versus 'Party of Principles'***

#### ***Introduction***

The Papal letter has opened new prospects for the relations between the Holy See and the PRC. However, the 'Vatican' diplomacy towards Beijing would unquestionably be more effective if the Holy See were able to overcome the two factors that appear to hinder its efforts towards the establishment of diplomatic relations with the PRC. As previously noted, the first factor, the rift and the rivalry between two factions that have contrasting views about the way to achieve the normalization of relations with Beijing, is endogenous to the Church. The second problem, the conflict of authority between the Catholic Church and the CPC, has instead an exogenous nature. The current chapter will investigate the former problem, while the next chapter will treat the latter issue. Initially this chapter will present the tension between the spiritual mission of the Church and its necessity to act within a worldly international political order and the resultant problematic coexistence of idealism and realism in the geopolitics of the Holy See. Secondly, the chapter will explore and analyze the rivalry between the two factions, one 'idealist' and the other one 'realist', that strive for influence in determining the *Sinopolitik* of the Holy See'. It will be seen that the struggle - because it has great resonance *in* the media and is often fought *through* the media - is not confined to

ecclesiastics, but also involves journalists, academics, and prominent politicians. Subsequently, the ways in which the sectors of the Chinese apparatus that are against the establishment of relations with Rome take advantage of the rivalry will be analyzed. Finally, the chapter will identify the three main initiatives that, since the beginning of 2007, the Pope and his collaborators have undertaken with the aim of ending the pernicious confrontation between the two factions. These initiatives reveal that the Roman Pontiff believes that the Catholic hierarchy, in order to make significant progress towards the normalization of Rome's relations with China, needs to force the ranks to loyally follow his line.

### *The Difficult Coexistence of Idealism and Realism*

As explained in Chapter I, the Holy See is a supra-territorial entity in which the 'temporal' and the 'spiritual' coexist and blend together. The Catholic Church in fact has a distinctive nature: it is, borrowing the words of Saint Augustine, simultaneously an 'earthly city' and a 'heavenly city'. Its mission, its *raison d'être*, is meant to be heavenly. But as an 'earthly city', it belongs to the same order that governs the other subjects of international law. And so the foreign policy of its supreme government, the Holy See, can be analyzed within this order, according to its greater or lesser proximity to the prevalent interpretations of international politics in the last decades: realism, idealism, rationalism, etcetera.

"The basic concept of power is the ability to influence others to get them to do

what you want.”<sup>1</sup> According to the American scholar Joseph Nye, this result can be obtained in two ways: through the exertion of soft power or hard power. “Soft power is the ability to get what you want by attracting and persuading others to adopt your goals. [...] hard power, the ability to use the carrots and sticks of economic and military might to make others follow your will.”<sup>2</sup> As a matter of fact, the Holy See exercises territorial sovereignty only over the Vatican City State and has only a symbolic military force. Therefore its hard power, measured through quantitative metrics such as population, size and concrete military assets, is virtually nonexistent. On the other hand, the Holy See can, in theory, be regarded as a trans-national community to which one billion Catholics around the world belong in spirit and whose ethical directives they are inclined to follow. Moreover, the Holy See can rely on an extremely well-trained, efficient and informed diplomatic service<sup>3</sup> for its interaction with other international actors. The diplomacy of the Apostolic See is programmatically non-coercive, due both to the lack of military or economic means of coercion/retaliation and to the Holy See’s proclaimed will to act for the good of humankind. All these elements, together with the venerable history of the Church, contribute to the high international prestige of the Holy See and endow it with a considerable influence and ethical-political leverage in the international arena. In other words, the Holy See has a substantial soft power which, on several occasions is greater than the soft power that other actors, like major state entities, can exert. Moreover, the fact that the Catholic Church operates on a global scale and is extensively present, and influential, in the

---

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Nye as quoted in *Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs - Books for Breakfast*, “Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics”, 13 April 2004, <http://www.cceia.org/resources/transcripts/4466.html#1>. Accessed 8 June 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph Nye, “Propaganda Isn’t the Way: Soft Power”, *International Herald Tribune*, 10 January 2003, [http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/news/opeds/2003/nye\\_soft\\_power\\_iht\\_011003.htm](http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/news/opeds/2003/nye_soft_power_iht_011003.htm). Accessed 8 June 2007.

<sup>3</sup> *Economist*, “Papal Diplomacy. God’s Ambassadors”, 19 July 2007, [www.economist.com/world/international/displaystory.cfm?story\\_id=9516461](http://www.economist.com/world/international/displaystory.cfm?story_id=9516461). Accessed 24 July 2007.

civil society of numerous states, especially Western and Latin American ones, should be taken into account. The transnational presence of the Church, together with its efficient organization, wealth and hierarchical centralism adds to its supreme government's influence in world affairs. The Holy See can not only exercise an indubitable soft power, but, through the institution that it governs, it also has a power that lies astride the ideal border between soft and hard power. A power which originates from the Church's capability to act simultaneously at the global and the local levels.

Given that the Holy See has a predominantly soft power and that the Church has a spiritual mission - namely, the propagation of the faith - it would be logical to suppose that the Holy See's foreign policy is markedly idealist. Actually, because international relations belong to a realm of 'earthly cities', the foreign policy line of the Apostolic See is an essentially realist one. According to realist theories, in the international political system, the objective of each international actor is the promotion and the defence of its interest. Defining, as realists do, the national interest as pure state power, implies that states' foreign policy is essentially the defence and expansion of their power. This is not the case of the Holy See, whose 'national interest' is the predication and expansion of Catholicism. However, the precondition for the pursuit of such an interest is the perpetuation and the strengthening of the Holy See (and the Catholic Church) in the international environment. Thus, for a systemic reason, the Holy See's diplomacy - although idealist in its ends - tends to be realist in its method.

The realism of Rome is generally combined with the cardinal virtue of prudence. For example, realism and prudence were the criteria that informed the politics of



the Holy See towards the Communist bloc during the Cold War decades. Paul VI, in 1965, speaking of the persecution of Catholics in the Communist countries, explained the line of the Apostolic See: "The Holy See abstains from raising more frequently its voice in legitimate protest and outrage, not because it ignores or overlooks the reality of things, but out of considerations imbued with Christian patience and to avoid provoking greater evils."<sup>4</sup> In any case, the Holy See's realism is always interwoven with idealism - in theory, the alpha and omega of the Church's foreign policy - and sometimes the latter surfaces and even prevails, as in the case of John Paul II's line towards Poland in the 1980s, characterized by a 'revolutionary idealism'.<sup>5</sup>

Actually, the coexistence of realism and idealism is not always a peaceful one. Often it causes tensions and disputes within the Church. These disputes and tensions, when it comes to China, generate bitter rivalries and divisions. These rivalries and divisions have crystallized into two factions. The first faction believes that a realist and conciliatory diplomacy is the only way to achieve diplomatic relations with the PRC, and that the exchange of ambassadors with Beijing would, in itself, lead to greater religious freedom for Chinese Catholics in the future. The second group, although conceding that diplomacy requires realism and a certain degree of compromise, maintains instead that a political-diplomatic line that does not openly uphold the reasons and the principles of the Church does not really serve the Catholic cause. Each faction claims that the stance of the other is radically wrong and counterproductive. The members of the first group accuse their opponents of sterile, confrontational idealism. The members of the second party

---

<sup>4</sup> Paul VI as quoted in Sandro Magister, "Between Venus and Mars, the Church of Rome Chooses Both", *www.chiesa*, 12 December 2005, <http://chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it/articolo/43322?&eng=y>. Accessed 15 February 2007.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibidem*

reply by accusing their rivals of Machiavellianism and betrayal of the Chinese faithful.<sup>6</sup>

In March 1999, China-expert Bernardo Cervellera - a priest with the Rome-based Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions (PIME<sup>7</sup>) and then editor of *International Fides News Service* - issued an editorial to ask the Chinese president to release two 'underground' bishop or at least tell where the two men were being held and under what charges. In reaction to Cervellera's plea, on 22 March 1999, the Holy See Press Office issued a statement through its then-director, Joaquin Navarro Valls: "The Secretariat of State up until now has taken no step concerning the liberation of the two bishops of Baoding. The circulation of such news was a personal initiative of Fr Bernardo Cervellera, not agreed on by authorities at the Secretariat of State [...] Therefore, the ideas raised in the International Fides Service are Fr Cervellera's personal opinions for which he assumes full responsibility."<sup>8</sup> Despite the public reprimand, Cervellera persisted in his denunciation of the persecution of the Chinese Catholics loyal to Rome. In February 2002, at the same moment as the opening of the annual session of the Chinese parliament, he published on the *Fides* website a list of imprisoned bishops and priests. This time the sanction of the Curia was drastic: in April 2002, "he reportedly was forced to clean out his desk, shown

---

<sup>6</sup> The existence of these two factions has been acknowledged by John Allen, the Vatican Correspondent for the American newsweekly *National Catholic Reporter*. In 2005, Allen - who is usually well informed about Holy See politics - stated that: "In the Vatican today one can find the same divisions on China as used to exist on the old Soviet Union - one current supporting a gradualist, *realpolitik* approach, another taking a slightly more assertive line." (John Allen, "China, Taiwan and the Vatican", *National Catholic Reporter*, 25 November 2005, <http://www.nationalcatholicreporter.org/word/word112505.htm>. Accessed 23 March 2007).

<sup>7</sup> PIME is the acronym of *Pontificio Istituto Missioni Estere* (Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions).

<sup>8</sup> Joaquin Navarro Valls as quoted in Theresa Marie Moreau, "Searching for Bishop Su. Persecuted Chinese bishop gone but not forgotten", *Remnant*, 26 July 2006, [www.RemnantNewspaper.com](http://www.RemnantNewspaper.com). Accessed 2 August 2007.

the door and told never to return to that newsroom. Ever.”<sup>9</sup> But the priest did not give up. In November 2003 he joined the staff of *Asia News*, a PIME monthly magazine. Now, he is the editor of *AsiaNews.it*, the trilingual (Italian, English and Chinese) on-line version of the magazine.<sup>10</sup> The portal is a reliable and authoritative source of information on politics, society and religious freedom in Asian countries. But above all, the website punctually documents in detail the abuses inflicted upon the ‘underground’ Catholics in the PRC and the dark side of ‘socialism with Chinese characteristics’.<sup>11</sup> On 5 March 2005, Cervellera issued an updated list of the missing priests and launched a widely supported international campaign for their release.<sup>12</sup>

The harsh way the PIME missionary was treated begs an explanation. Why did somebody - somebody evidently very powerful and influential - in the Roman Curia decide to punish Fr Cervellera so severely for his denunciation of the sufferings, sometimes *usque ad effusionem sanguinis*,<sup>13</sup> of clergymen incarcerated for their loyalty to the successor of Peter? Would not the Catholic Church be

---

<sup>9</sup> Theresa Marie Moreau, “Searching for Bishop Su. Persecuted Chinese bishop gone but not forgotten”.

<sup>10</sup> Sandro Magister, “Vatican Rumors: The Rise of the Red Pope”, *www.chiesa*, 25 June 2004, <http://chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it/articolo/7049?eng=y>. Accessed 3 August 2007.

<sup>11</sup> Socialism with Chinese characteristics’ is an official term for the economy of the PRC which currently consists of mixed forms of private and public ownership competing within a market environment, creating a system that is, in essence, identical to capitalism where the state dominates parts of the economy.

<sup>12</sup> “The campaign has been echoed by the parliament of the European Union, through the initiative of its Italian vice-president, Mario Mauro. In the United States, Bishop John H. Ricard, chairman of the American Episcopal Conference’s Committee on International Policy, sent a letter to the Chinese ambassador to Washington on March 11, asking for an explanation for the arrests and objecting to not having received any reply to three earlier protest letters he sent in 2004.” (Sandro Magister, “China: A Cardinal’s Flattery Doesn’t Set Any Bishops Free”, *www.chiesa*, 21 March 2005, <http://chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it/articolo/25526&eng=y>. Accessed 4 August 2007).

<sup>13</sup> *Usque ad effusionem sanguinis*, in Latin means “to the point of shedding their blood.” - that is, even as martyrs. This sentence is usually referred to the cardinals of the Catholic Church, whose red hats signify that they are expected to witness to the faith ‘even unto the shedding of blood’, and to the martyrs, who have given their life for Christ. As previously said, the Swiss Guards, when making their oath of fidelity to the Holy See, swear to defend the life of the Roman Pontiff *usque ad effusionem sanguinis*. (*Inside the Vatican*, “Who are the Cardinals?”, 2001, <http://www.catholiceducation.org/articles/religion/re0490.html>. Accessed 4 August 2007).

supposed to care, even at the media level, for its sons and pastors? A plausible answer to these questions is that the Holy See did not want, by any means, to irritate the Chinese authorities and jeopardize dialogue with Beijing; even at the cost of neglecting its imprisoned sons. Moreover, some high prelates presumably feared that provoking the Communist authorities would have resulted in a worsening of the repression over the 'underground' Church.<sup>14</sup> Thus, the reprimand and the dismissal of Cervellera needed to be made official and public in order to make clear to Beijing that the Italian priest had not spoken for the Holy See. The fact that Fr Cervellera retained his post in spite of the 1999 official reproof and, three years later, decided to release the list of the imprisoned clerics, as well as the vast support enjoyed by his later campaign, suggest that he was (and is) not completely lacking in support within the Vatican and the Church. His story, therefore, reveals a very important element about the *Sinopolitik* of the Holy See: the existence of the two aforementioned different approaches, attitudes, stances, and also political-diplomatic lines, on relations with China. This internal dichotomy signals that when it comes to the Chinese question, there are - as previously noted - two parties within the Catholic Church. The term 'party' is here employed for convenience, for the sake of explanation and simplification. This term, in fact, only partially reflects a divide that is much more profoundly complex and nuanced.

---

<sup>14</sup> Gerolamo Fazzini (edited by), *Il libro rosso dei martiri cinesi. Testimonianze e resoconti autobiografici*, Edizioni San Paolo, Cinisello Balsamo (Italy), 2006.

### *'Party of Compromise' versus 'Party of Principles'*

As *Foreign Policy*'s Stacy Meichtry highlights: "influential prelates, unlike politicians, are shy when it comes to criticizing the powers that be."<sup>15</sup> Seen with the eye of the social scientist, the Catholic Church appears as a hierarchical and tendentially monolithic organization:<sup>16</sup> one that draws its strength from its unity and centralism in decision-making (and, *ça va sans dire*, its tradition). From the Church's point of view and historical experience, pluralism and rivalries are synonyms with heterodoxy and schism. Thus, a certain degree of 'political' pluralism is allowed only if it does not threaten the overall ecclesial unity. Even at the public level, it is in the interest of the Church's prestige<sup>17</sup> to project an image of unity and cohesiveness. For these reasons, open disagreements and rivalries in the bosom of the Church are hardly tolerated and seldom remain unpunished. Consequently, politics inside the Vatican is anything but practised out in the open, contributing to make the Roman Curia one of the world's most nebulous political environments.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, the contrasts, the rivalries and the power struggles within Catholic officialdom can only be discerned or deducted rather than directly observed and demonstrated.

The differences between the two aforementioned factions are, as already said, made public by the writings, declarations and initiatives of clerics, scholars and journalists that belong to them. For example, the existence within the Vatican and the Catholic Church of the two 'parties' - one prone to somehow compromise the

---

<sup>15</sup> Stacy Meichtry, "The Pope's Prognosticator", *Foreign Policy*, Vol. 85, No. 1, January/February 2006, pp. 86-87.

<sup>16</sup> F.K., "Governance in the Church", *New Blackfriars*, Vol. 81, No. 955, September 2000, pp. 306-308.

<sup>17</sup> That is to say, its soft power.

<sup>18</sup> Stacy Meichtry, "The Pope's Prognosticator", p. 86.

Church's principles for the sake of diplomatic relations with the PRC, another standing firm in the defence of such principles - is clearly illustrated in an article by Sr Betty Ann Maheu, China analyst at the Holy Spirit Centre in Hong Kong since 1990.<sup>19</sup> "Some advise: 'Establish relations first and then work out the details.' It seems to me that it is essential to work out the details before establishing relations to ensure that no principles are compromised."<sup>20</sup> This statement, besides ascribing Sr Maheu to the 'Party of Principles', perspicuously outlines the core of the contention between the two factions. Notably, the existence of the 'Party of Compromise' is revealed mainly indirectly: through the publications and the declarations of its opponents. Fr Cervellera, without any doubt an exponent - if not one of the champions - of the Party of Principles, writes in his book *Missione Cina* (*Mission China*):

[...] It is clear that diplomatic relations must serve the freedom of the Church. But among the people in charge of the Holy See diplomacy there are some impatient persons who, in order to have diplomatic relations with Beijing, would agree to any sort of compromise. [...] The diplomatic relations between the Holy See and China are [...] a problem that has marked the entire second half of the XX century and involves the most populous nation in the world and the world's most ancient institution. Solving such a problem would recommend the solvers to history. Even in the Vatican, there is no lack of overzealous people willing to leave their name to history.<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup> From 1990 until 2004, she served as the English editor of *Tripod*, a quarterly journal of research and analysis of the Catholic Church in China.

<sup>20</sup> Betty Ann Maheu, "The Catholic Church in China", *America Press News*, Vol. 193, No. 14, 7 November 2005, pp. 13-14.

<sup>21</sup> Bernardo Cervellera, *Missione Cina*, pp. 211-212.

In Cervellera's book, the names of the members of the 'Party of Compromise' are intentionally left in the shadow. They are hinted at but not spelled out. The task of fathoming the identity of the 'compromisers' is left to analysts, journalists, academics, clergymen and other "highly skilled navigators of the Roman Curia."<sup>22</sup> Obviously, the 'compromisers' are supposed to recognize themselves in the description given by the author.

This is also the style of Fr Gianni Criveller, like Sr Maheu an expert on Holy See-China relations based at the *Holy Spirit Study Centre* of Hong Kong, an authoritative Catholic think-tank that often seems to voice the instances of the 'Party of Principles'.<sup>23</sup> In a 2005 issue of *Tripod*, a quarterly published by the Centre, Criveller stressed the importance of principles over *realpolitik*<sup>24</sup> and stigmatised the stance of the 'compromisers' - together with the people he supposedly regarded as their political and mediatic sycophants - without pinning a name on them:

In the recent past Vatican diplomats, or people close to Vatican circles, have engaged in a great deal of activism towards Chinese authorities. Reports of imminent breakthroughs appeared in the media, often accompanied by faulty information that indicates that the writers have little or no grasp of a complex situation. I believe that diplomacy and diplomatic

---

<sup>22</sup> Stacy Meichtry, "The Pope's Prognosticator", p. 86.

<sup>23</sup> The Holy Spirit Study Centre, established in 1980, is an organ of the Diocese of Hong Kong. "It is a research institute whose primary practical task has been to gather, store and analyze pertinent data about China that will serve to broaden understanding of the Mainland's rapidly changing situation, and to effect appropriate Christian responses." (Holy Spirit Study Centre, "About us", *Holy Spirit Study Centre*, 2006, [http://www.hsstudyc.org.hk/en/en\\_intro.html](http://www.hsstudyc.org.hk/en/en_intro.html). Accessed 6 August 2007).

<sup>24</sup> "Realpolitik as commonly understood and referred to by most foreign policy experts has been the term of art to describe the practice of power politics based on a tough-minded, realistic view of the political, economic, and security factors that dominate any given situation." (Douglas Johnston, *Faith-Based Diplomacy: Trumping Realpolitik*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2003, p. xi)

relations might be useful but not essential at all to the mission of the Church, which is essentially religious and spiritual.<sup>25</sup>

Cardinal Joseph Zen, the outspoken and often undiplomatically frank Bishop of Hong Kong, has been even blunter than the two analysts, although equally name-shunning. In January 2007, the prelate - who can be considered the champion of the 'Party of Principles' - sternly condemned the position of a no-better-identified 'somebody' in the official Chinese Church: "Compromise is compromise and cannot last forever. To be in communion with the Holy Father and to remain in a Church that declares itself to be independent, is a contradiction. The Holy See magnanimously tolerates that. We accept it with humiliation."<sup>26</sup>

There seems to be a non-written rule for clergymen: 'If you criticize or accuse other clergymen, you should do it impersonally and/or obscurely. Let people read between the lines.' When the rule is not abided by, the echo of the clash is loud and the damage to the 'unity façade' of the Church substantial. This is epitomized by the recent confrontation over the interpretation of the Papal letter between Cardinal Zen and the aforementioned Fr Jeroom Heyndrickx, a sinologist who directs the Ferdinand Verbiest Institute at the Catholic University of Louvain.<sup>27</sup> The *casus belli* has been Heyndrickx's commentary on the Papal letter, published on 6 July 2007 by *UCA News*, the most important Catholic news agency in East Asia.<sup>28</sup> In his commentary, the Belgian priest argued that the Papal letter encourages the

---

<sup>25</sup> Gianni Criveller, "John Paul II and China", *Tripod*, Vol. 25, No. 137, Summer 2005, p. 30.

<sup>26</sup> Joseph Zen as quoted in *Asianews.it*, "Card. Zen: "No openings for religious freedom in China"", 8 January 2007, <http://www.asianews.it/index.php?l=en&art=8174&geo=6&theme=2&size=A>. Accessed 20 January 2007.

<sup>27</sup> Holy See-expert Sandro Magister suggested that the disputation between Cardinal Zen and Fr Heyndrickx was, actually, a confrontation between the two factions. "Two political approaches collide," wrote the Italian journalist. (Sandro Magister, "The Pope Writes, but the Beijing Authorities Don't Respond").

<sup>28</sup> Sandro Magister, "The Pope Writes, but the Beijing Authorities Don't Respond".



‘underground’ Catholics to ask for the recognition of the government and to share the sacraments with the ‘official’ clergy.<sup>29</sup> A few days later, Cardinal Zen rejected the interpretation of the Belgian priest as a distortion of Benedict XVI’s message. According to the Papal letter, Zen pointed out, the sacraments can be shared only with those clergymen of the ‘patriotic’ Church on communion with the Pope, and not with those who reject the primacy of Rome. Therefore, the ‘clandestine’ Church will continue to have a reason to exist as long as the Beijing authorities try to take control and subdue the Church. On the basis of the Pope’s words, the Cardinal added, the clandestine bishops have no reason to seek official recognition if this entails - as “almost always” happens - assuming obligations “contrary to the dictates of their conscience as Catholics.”<sup>30</sup> “It is astonishing,” wrote the Hong Kong Cardinal, “that intelligent and learned as Fr. Heyndrickx is, he could possibly misread the Pope’s letter to the Catholics in China.”<sup>31</sup> The Cardinal advanced a suspicion: that Fr. Heyndrickx’s “achievements can become liabilities” and that “his every initiative needs the approval of Mr. Liu Bainian, head of the Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association, and has to be carried out according to conditions imposed by him. [...] The enormous power of Mr. Liu has allowed him to oppress and humiliate our bishops. [...] Fr. Heyndrickx did not see things that way, but blamed the confrontation on us (on me?).”<sup>32</sup>

This was an extremely serious allegation, given that for the overwhelming majority of Chinese Catholics - including many ‘official’ ones - Liu Bainian represents the

---

<sup>29</sup> Jeroom Heyndrickx, “The Beginning of a New Phase in the History of the Church in China”, *UCA News*, 6 July 2007, [http://www.ucanews.com/html/ucan/f\\_currentspecialdetail.asp?ucalang=English&sPath=news\\_report/english/2007/07/w3/fri/CH02968Cg.txt](http://www.ucanews.com/html/ucan/f_currentspecialdetail.asp?ucalang=English&sPath=news_report/english/2007/07/w3/fri/CH02968Cg.txt). Accessed 22 July 2007.

<sup>30</sup> Joseph Zen Ze-kian, “Don’t misread the Pope’s letter”, *UCA News*, 18 July 2007, [http://www.ucanews.com/html/ucan/f\\_currentspecialdetail.asp?ucalang=English&sPath=news\\_report/english/2007/07/w3/fri/CH02968Cg.txt](http://www.ucanews.com/html/ucan/f_currentspecialdetail.asp?ucalang=English&sPath=news_report/english/2007/07/w3/fri/CH02968Cg.txt). Accessed 22 July 2007.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem*

<sup>32</sup> *Ibidem*

very embodiment of the state's repressive policy of 'nationalization' of the Catholic Church. On July 20, Fr Heyndrickx responded to Cardinal Zen's accusations with a note reported by *UCA News*. He restated his interpretation of the Papal letter, claimed it was shared by many leaders of the Chinese Church, proclaimed his loyalty to the Church and the Pope, and presented himself as a man of dialogue, implicitly arguing that Zen is a man of conflict. "I have tried hard to walk that road of dialogue. I do not pretend that I always succeeded. [...] Dialogue is not equal to weakness, but is the spirit of the Pope's letter, which we all should follow. [...] An open dialogue between a united Chinese Church and a united Chinese government will solve more problems than confrontation between a divided Church and a divided government."<sup>33</sup> In his response, Heyndrickx also made clear that, from his viewpoint, Cardinal Zen's public attack on him was basically an act of cowardice: "But I have learned that it does not take much courage to use the media to prove one's own views and criticize others while it takes a lot of guts to sit down with those who disagree with you and have long personal dialogues to overcome differences and seek the common ground."<sup>34</sup>

The fact that Cardinal Zen explicitly mentioned Fr Heyndrickx, while the latter did not nominate his opponent, is partially explicable in terms of the hierarchical asymmetry between the prelate and the Sinologist. The status enjoyed by Joseph Zen within the ecclesiastic hierarchy assured that he could publicly attack the Belgian priest with the full weight of his authority without fear of any sanction. However, the 'frontal offensive' of Cardinal Zen reveals that, given the crucial

---

<sup>33</sup> Jerom Heyndrickx, "In Obedience To The Pope, Not To Any Partner in Dialogue", *UCA News*, 20 July 2007, [http://www.ucanews.com/html/ucan/f\\_currentspecialdetail.asp?ucalang=English&sPath=news\\_report/english/2007/07/w3/fri/CH02968Cg.txt](http://www.ucanews.com/html/ucan/f_currentspecialdetail.asp?ucalang=English&sPath=news_report/english/2007/07/w3/fri/CH02968Cg.txt). Accessed 22 July 2007.

<sup>34</sup> Ibidem

nature of the issue, he felt compelled to clearly indicate to the Catholic public, as well as to the Church officialdom who in his opinion is an agent of the 'Party of Compromise' and whose interpretation of the Papal epistle is, in his view, deviationist.

With the benefit of hindsight, it is not daring to assert that the 'Party of Principle' has won the dispute on the interpretation of the Pope's letter. Rome, in fact, did not simply limit itself to refraining from taking sides in the dispute, but implicitly endorsed Cardinal Zen's position when he questioned the accuracy of the Chinese translation released by the Holy See. In a statement released on 3 July by the Hong Kong Catholic Diocese, Cardinal Zen pointed out what he regarded as two misleading discrepancies and highlighted that the Explanatory Note is not part of Benedict XVI's letter.<sup>35</sup> The diocese of Hong Kong even released a revised version of the Holy See's Chinese translation of the Papal letter.<sup>36</sup> The text of the revised version was published in the July 15 issue of *Kung Kao Po*, the diocesan Chinese weekly.<sup>37</sup> Rome, at least officially, did not raise any objection. If the Holy See disapproved the initiative of the purple-clad cleric (editing the Holy See official version of the letter of the Roman Pontiff!), it would have certainly publicly censored Zen or ordered him to retract. Moreover, on 22 July, Benedict XVI received the Chinese prelate at Lorenzago di Cadore (Venetian Alps, Italy), where the Holy Father was vacationing. The Bishop of Hong Kong gave the Pope first-

---

<sup>35</sup> *UCA News*, "Cardinal Zen Points Out Errors in Chinese Translations", 3 July 2007, <http://www.ucanews.com>. Accessed 9 July 2007.

<sup>36</sup> *Catholic News*, "Hong Kong diocese issues revised version of Papal letter to China's Catholics", 6 August 2007, <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/new.php?n=10054>. Accessed 24 July 2007.

<sup>37</sup> In addition, 30,000 booklets of the revised text in traditional Chinese characters and another 30,000 in simplified characters were printed for free distribution. The booklets were distributed in all Hong Kong parishes.

hand news on the reception of his letter to Chinese Catholics.<sup>38</sup> The meeting - one of the few that Benedict XVI conceded at his mountain retreat - re-accredited the Cardinal as a trusted China advisor of the Pope and signalled to the Catholic hierarchy and Beijing that Zen's line is not without support in the Vatican.

Open confrontations between ecclesiastics, like the one between Cardinal Zen and Fr Heyndrickx are, however, exceptions. Usually, when the two factions want to discredit their political foes, they choose to do it through lay journalists who sympathize with their cause. Journalists, unlike clergymen, are not bound by any Church rule, written or unwritten. They can freely express their opinion, even if it is politically incorrect. They can also use a vitriolic language that would be reprehensible - and punishable - if used by a cleric. This is precisely what happened in 2005, when an octuagenarian Cardinal of the Roman Curia released a book which appears in strident contrast with the line of the 'Party of Principles'. The book, entitled *Verso i cristiani in Cina, visti da una rana dal fondo di un pozzo* (*Christians in China, Seen by a Frog at the Bottom of a Well*),<sup>39</sup> advocates a sympathetic line toward the Chinese government and seldom mentions the sufferings of the 'underground' Catholics. The author is Cardinal Roger Etchegaray, vice-dean of the College of Cardinals<sup>40</sup> and president emeritus of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. A man of dialogue *par excellence*, who was for many years the personal envoy of John Paul II to theatres of crisis, and who,

---

<sup>38</sup> Zenit, "Cardinal Zen Updates Pontiff on China", July 23 2007, <http://www.zenit.org/article-20200?l=english>. Accessed 24 July 2007.

<sup>39</sup> "The Chinese have a proverb that a frog at the bottom of a well sees only a narrow circle of the sky" (Daniel Y. K. Kwan, *Marxist Intellectuals and the Chinese Labor Movement: A Study of Deng Zhongxia (1894-1933)*, University of Washington Press, Washington D.C., 1997, p. 201).

<sup>40</sup> The Sacred College of Cardinals is the body of all Cardinals of the Roman Catholic Church. The College plays two fundamental roles: participating in papal elections when the Holy See is vacant, and advising the Pope about Church matters when he summons them to an ordinary consistory.

occasionally, still acts as a 'diplomatic facilitator' for Benedict XVI.<sup>41</sup> On four occasions - in 1980, 1996, 2000, and 2003 - Etchegaray visited the PRC, "sometimes with the consensus of John Paul II."<sup>42</sup> In the preface to his book the prelate explains that the publication is merely an account of what he has "seen and heard"<sup>43</sup> during his visits: namely, only the little patch of sky that a frog can see from the bottom of a well.

In an article published in the Italian weekly *L'Espresso* soon after the issuing of the book, renowned *vaticanista*<sup>44</sup> Sandro Magister<sup>45</sup> - after commending Fr Cervellera's for his decision to release an updated list of bishops and priests imprisoned in China and for his relentless denunciation of the violations of human rights in China - embarks on a tirade against the French ecclesiastic. Etchegaray, maintains the journalist, "evidently [...] saw and heard little, and that poorly."<sup>46</sup> To support this assertion, Magister rhetorically asks the reader some questions and contextually answers them: "But then why did he not set this 'little patch' beside the facts that his hosts carefully concealed from him, but which he could have learned from other sources, and if not at the time, then later? Why didn't he dismantle the deception that these visits were composed of? He didn't do it. And with this Cardinal Etchegaray added his name to the disreputable list of illustrious pilgrims - from the world of politics and culture - who in past decades have visited

---

<sup>41</sup> For example, in August 2007 Etchegaray flew to Russia to meet with the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Alexy II to discuss cooperation between European churches and to hand him a letter from Pope Benedict XVI.

<sup>42</sup> Sandro Magister, "China: A Cardinal's Flattery Doesn't Set Any Bishops Free", *www.chiesa*, 21 March 2005, <http://chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it/articolo/25526?eng=y>. Accessed 15 January 2007.

<sup>43</sup> Roger Etchegaray, *Verso i cristiani in Cina, visti da una rana dal fondo di un pozzo*, Mondadori, Milano, 2005, p. 3.

<sup>44</sup> The Italian word *vaticanista* identifies an analyst of the Holy See's policies and of politics within the Roman Curia.

<sup>45</sup> Sandro Magister covers the Vatican for *L'Espresso*, an influential Italian newsweekly magazine with more than 600,000 readers. He also teaches Contemporary Church History at the University of Urbino (Italy).

<sup>46</sup> Sandro Magister, "China: A Cardinal's Flattery Doesn't Set Any Bishops Free".

the USSR, Cuba, China, and other such destinations, punctually making reports enthusiastic, naive, or in any case far from reality.”<sup>47</sup>

The point that Magister tries to make is that the Cardinal’s solicitousness for soothing and reassuring his Chinese hosts in order to persuade them of the innocuous nature and goodwill of the Catholic Church brought him to compromise too much - as Magister hints - both at personal and doctrinal level. The *vaticanista* in fact reminds his readers that, on his first visit to China, the Cardinal underwent an ‘interview’ with questions such as “How the Archbishop of Marseille can exercise his ‘autonomy’ without suffering the least ‘imperialism’ by the pastor of the universal Church?”<sup>48</sup> As for the doctrine, one of the two supplemental documents concluding Etchegaray’s book is a short essay by Chinese Communist scholar Pan Yue.<sup>49</sup> The final thesis of the PRC intellectual is that “Chinese cultural tradition obliges all religions to submit themselves to the sovereign authority, to serve authority.”<sup>50</sup> This applies to all religions including Christianity, which “came in through the power of the cannon.”<sup>51</sup> Magister ends his article with a caustic remark that sounds like a condemnation of the stance of the ‘compromisers’ and a praise for the ‘Party of Principle’: “Will flattery like Etchegaray’s produce better results? The answer is in the list of the persecuted that *Asia News* has released.”<sup>52</sup>

On the ‘Party of Compromise’ side, one publication in particular serves as a rival attraction to the press of the opposite faction: *30Days*, a monthly Catholic

---

<sup>47</sup> Ibidem

<sup>48</sup> Roger Etchegaray, *Verso i cristiani in Cina, visti da una rana dal fondo di un pozzo*, pp. 26-27. In 1980, Cardinal Etchegaray was the Archbishop of Marseille.

<sup>49</sup> The Essay, entitled “On Advancing the Marxist viewpoint on Religion over Time”, was originally translated in Italian and published by the Catholic quarterly *Chiesa d’Asia* in March 2002.

<sup>50</sup> Pan Yue, “On Advancing the Marxist viewpoint on Religion over time”, in Roger Etchegaray, *Verso i cristiani in Cina, visti da una rana dal fondo di un pozzo*, pp. 83-84.

<sup>51</sup> Ibidem, p. 84.

<sup>52</sup> Sandro Magister, “China: A Cardinal’s Flattery Doesn’t Set Any Bishops Free”.

magazine in multiple languages. *30Days* is the brainchild of former Italian Christian Democrat premier Giulio Andreotti, who directs it. Mr Andreotti is renowned for his realist outlook upon diplomacy,<sup>53</sup> and his magazine is a coherent application of realism to the Church's international politics.<sup>54</sup> More specifically, the articles about Church in China and Holy See-PRC relations published on Andreotti's magazine, reflect the 'realist' line of the 'Party of Compromise'. In these articles, the reader would hardly find any references to the persecutions afflicting Christians in China or to the incarceration, over the recent decades, of numerous bishops, priests, and faithful. Sometimes the very titles of the articles represent an endorsement of compromise and an encouragement towards a 'pragmatic' diplomatic solution. "Praise of flexibility", the title given to an interview with Shanghai 'official' bishop, Aloysius Jin Luxian, by Gianni Valente - published a few weeks before the issuing of the Papal letter - is an emblematic example of *30Days*' 'policy of titles'.<sup>55</sup> Two months later, the magazine featured Valente's commentary on the letter of Benedict XVI. In the concluding remark, after praising the team of the Pope's collaborators who, "discreet and free of the itch to take center stage," have "gone along with the handling of the China dossier in the Vatican palaces," the journalist attributes to them all "a realistic and flexible line that has the good of souls as its criterion even in relations with the world."<sup>56</sup> Thus, he indirectly claimed to his faction all the Holy See officials who contributed to the preparation of the Papal letter.

---

<sup>53</sup> According to Spanish international relations scholar Professor Florentino Portero, "Andreotti is a perfect specimen of one of the most radical realist sub-schools, the cynical school." (Florentino Portero, "El debate estratégico estadounidense en el ocaso de la presidencia de George W. Bush", *Grupo de Estudios Estratégicos GEES*, 10 July 2006, p. 5). In Italy Andreotti is commonly known as the 'Italian Kissinger'.

<sup>54</sup> Sandro Magister, "Between Venus and Mars, the Church of Rome Chooses Both".

<sup>55</sup> Gianni Valente, "Praise of Flexibility", *30Days*, May 2007, <http://www.30giorni.it/us/articolo.asp?id=14517>. Accessed 13 June 2007.

<sup>56</sup> Gianni Valente, "For a calm and tranquil life", *30Days*, July 2007, <http://www.30giorni.it/us/articolo.asp?id=15042>. Accessed 28 July 2007. This sentence seems to be a veiled critic to the mediatic vocality of the 'Party of Principle'.

Giulio Andreotti's liaison with the Vatican is well-known.<sup>57</sup> For at least three decades, the seven-time Prime Minister of Italy - now lifetime senator - has been, on several occasions, unofficially or semi-officially in charge of diplomatic policy for the Holy See.<sup>58</sup> Andreotti's diplomatic action towards China has been mainly one of publications, conferences, meetings, and public statements. For instance, in 2001 Andreotti - Honorary Chairman of the *Istituto Italo-Cinese (Italian-Chinese Institute)* - published a book on Jesuit Matteo Ricci in a moment when the dialogue between the Apostolic See and Beijing appeared very promising. Later that year, he declared that the Holy See could follow the 'Washington model' of establishing full diplomatic relations with Beijing, but at the same time maintaining "certain relations"<sup>59</sup> with Taiwan. Andreotti has been working closely with Cardinal Etchegaray. On 4 October 2001, the Hong Kong-based *Far Eastern Economic Review* reported that a delegation of two Pontifical officials - a Cardinal and a representative of the Holy See's Secretariat of State - was going to China and was to be accompanied by Giulio Andreotti.<sup>60</sup> The delegates were to attend a conference in Beijing on 14 October to mark the 400th anniversary of the beginning of Matteo Ricci's mission to China. Later in the month CPCA chairman Bishop Michael Fu Tieshan, was due to attend, at the invitation of the Italian Catholic Church, a conference on Ricci at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome.<sup>61</sup> It was the very conference during which the famous John Paul II's

---

<sup>57</sup> Speaking half in jest, former Italian President Francesco Cossiga has recently defined Andreotti as "the greatest permanent Secretary of State of the Holy See".

<sup>58</sup> Paul Liu, "Preserving ties with the Vatican", *Taipei Times*, 31 October 2001, p. 8.

<sup>59</sup> Giulio Andreotti as quoted in Paul Liu, "Preserving ties with the Vatican".

<sup>60</sup> David Murphy, "In communion", *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 4 October 2001, [http://www.feer.com/breaking\\_news/010926.html](http://www.feer.com/breaking_news/010926.html). Accessed 12 August 2007.

<sup>61</sup> The conference at the Gregorian University was organized through the good offices of the chairman of the *Associazione Italia-Cina* (Italy-China Association) Cesare Romiti, then FIAT's Chief Executive. (*Avvenire*, "Roma-Pechino, un pressante bisogno di comunicare", 24 May 2005, p. 13).



message to China – “as important as it was unexpected”<sup>62</sup> - was read for the first time. Unfortunately, the Chinese, “fearing events were moving too fast,”<sup>63</sup> made it known that Andreotti and the Pontifical representatives were not welcome and their visit was called off; so was Fu Tienshan’s trip to Rome. The Cardinal mentioned by the *Far Eastern Economic Review* was Roger Etchegaray.<sup>64</sup> In 2003, the realist politician and the French Cardinal jointly presented, at the Pontifical Urbanian University, a volume entitled *Il tesoro che fiorisce* (*The Blooming Treasure*), a photographic book on Chinese Catholics. The book was edited by Gianni Valente and published by *30Days*.<sup>65</sup>

It is clear that the rift between the two factions cuts not only through the Catholic Church, but also through academia, the media, politics and diplomacy. Prelates, scholars, journalists and politicians are involved in the strife that arises from the dispute on the *Sinopolitik* of the Holy See. Moreover, many of the contenders seem convinced that the faction which will determine the terms of the establishment of diplomatic relations with the PRC will attain not only an important victory over political foes, but will also set the foreign policy line of the Holy See towards China in the coming years.

The rivalry and the power struggles between the two parties have indeed been (and remain) one of the two main factors causing the diplomatic stalemate between the Apostolic See and Beijing. In fact, the tensions that course through the Church

---

<sup>62</sup> Elisa Giunipero, “Matteo Ricci: per un dialogo tra Cina e Occidente”, *Tuttocina*, [http://www.tuttocina.it/mondo\\_cinese/109/109\\_giun.htm](http://www.tuttocina.it/mondo_cinese/109/109_giun.htm). Accessed 6 September 2007.

<sup>63</sup> David Murphy, “Mass Appeal”, *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 27 December 2001, [http://www.feer.com/articles/2001/0112\\_27/p032china.html](http://www.feer.com/articles/2001/0112_27/p032china.html). Accessed 6 September 2007.

<sup>64</sup> Sandro Magister, “Lo strano ritiro spirituale di Jiang Zemin e compagni”, *www.chiesa*, 15 January 2002, <http://chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it/articolo/7535>. Accessed 17 January 2007.

<sup>65</sup> *30Days*, “Il tesoro che fiorisce”, February 2003, <http://www.30giorni.it/it/articolo.asp?id=317>. Accessed 8 May 2007.

make it difficult to exploit new diplomatic opportunities.<sup>66</sup> The conflicting strategies of the two factions and their reciprocal sabotage impede the Holy See in expressing and enacting, particularly at crucial moments when a breakthrough seems close, a univocal and coherent political-diplomatic line towards the PRC. The internal divide of the Church is cunningly exploited by those sectors of the Chinese establishment, *in primis* the CPCA leaders, which do not want the normalization of relations with Rome. On the one hand, they vocally lament that the behaviour and the declarations of some exponents of the 'Party of Principles' demonstrates that the Catholic Church is an imperialist entity that wants to lure China into diplomatic relations in order to better penetrate into Chinese society. They also claim that the ultimate goal of the Catholic Church is toppling the Communist government by diverting the loyalty of the Chinese people to the Pope rather than to the state. So far, the anti-imperialist and nationalist card has been played with success. Liu Bainian has played it again after the issuing of the Papal letter when, interviewed by *Xinhua*, he said: "Catholics in China want to select those with high theoretical achievements and with love for the country and the people, but the Vatican wants those who are opposed to the Communist Party."<sup>67</sup> Equally, the continuous attacks on Cardinal Zen, who annually marches for democracy in Hong Kong,<sup>68</sup> are part of the same strategy of presenting the Church as an enemy of the Chinese state.

At the same time, the Chinese officials court the 'compromisers', showing

---

<sup>66</sup> John Allen, "The uphill journey of Catholicism in China", *National Catholic Reporter*, 2 August 2007, <http://missional.info/2007/08/04/the-uphill-journey-of-catholicism-in-china>. Accessed 15 August 2007.

<sup>67</sup> Anthony Liu Bainian as quoted in Wu Jiao, "Patriotism and religion can go hand in hand", *Xinhua News Agency*, 6 September 2007, [www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2007-09/06/content\\_6084657.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2007-09/06/content_6084657.htm). Accessed 8 September 2007. It is noteworthy that Liu Bainian used the term 'Vatican' instead of 'Holy See'. He plausibly made it on purpose.

<sup>68</sup> *CBNnews*, "Hong Kong's Cardinal Zen on Freedom and Democracy", 5 June 2007, <http://www.cbn.com/CBNnews/189993.aspx>. Accessed 12 July 2007.

appreciation of their efforts for the 'cause of dialogue' and encourage them to continue on the path of dialogue in order to develop a 'better understanding' of PRC religious policy. It would seem that the purpose of the Chinese is to entice the compromisers into admitting that there can be more religious freedom for the Catholics in China only if the Holy See accepts the terms posed by the PRC government for establishing diplomatic ties. Actually, the Chinese know that the 'compromisers' could not make such a statement without being immediately rebuked by the top Pontifical authorities. The real purpose of the Chinese is thus to make the 'Party of Compromise' people even more prone to concession in order to widen the rift between them and the 'Party of Principle'. This would certainly weaken the position of the Holy See and hinder it in undertaking and implementing diplomatic initiatives towards China.

### *The Papal Initiatives to End the Factional Divide*

The Apostolic See is acutely aware that the rivalry between the two factions greatly undermines its attempts to achieve (on its terms) a diplomatic breakthrough with China. This is why, since the beginning of 2007, Benedict XVI has made at least three moves that are aimed at ending the confrontation between the two groups. In chronological order, these moves are: 1) the gathering of prelates and Church-in-China experts, held in the Vatican in January; 2) the appointment of Monsignor Fernando Filoni as Substitute of the Secretariat of State for the First Section of General Affairs in June 2007; 3) the issuing of the letter to Chinese Catholics.

One of the undeclared purposes of the special meeting on China called by the Pope

in January 2007 was to supposedly settle, once and for all, the divergences between the members of the two factions. And indeed the participants must have argued for a long time and on many issues, given that the previously mentioned official communiqué of the Holy See stated that “the wide-ranging and intricate debate was characterized by a frank and fraternal cordiality.”<sup>69</sup> Evidently, this statement is an elegant way to describe a ‘lively’ debate. Moreover, if the participation of some prelates, as representatives of the Chinese episcopate (Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan), was predictable, the invitation to some clerics and experts - and the exclusion of others - indirectly drew a dividing line between the people “who, for the Holy See, follow the Chinese question most closely,”<sup>70</sup> and those who do not. The discrimination among China experts, by giving a sort of Papal imprimatur only to a small number of persons, made it easier for the Holy See to prompt them to devise a common strategy for dealing with China.

The designation of Monsignor Fernando Filoni as Substitute of the Secretariat of State for the First Section of General Affairs<sup>71</sup> was another step towards the resolution of the dispute between the two parties. Filoni is an experienced diplomat and an expert in Chinese and Middle Eastern affairs.<sup>72</sup> In 1992-2001, he was

---

<sup>69</sup> *Holy See News Services*, “Comunicato della Sala Stampa Della Santa Sede: Riunione Sulla Situazione della Chiesa Cattolica nella Cina Continentale - Traduzione in lingua inglese”.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibidem*

<sup>71</sup> As explained in Chapter I, the Substitute of the Secretariat of State for the First Section of General Affairs directs one of the two sections into which the Secretariat of State is divided. It is a post of great authority and responsibility. “The *sostituto* is like chief of staff or secretary general in the secretariat of state, the central office at the heart of the Roman Curia. With regular access to the pontiff, his desk is the clearing house for everything in the Vatican. He is the conduit through which matters go to the pope, and communications come from the pope to all Roman Curia offices.” (Gerard O’Connell, “Key Vatican appointment signals that Benedict’s chosen team fully in place”, *UCA News*, 11 June 2007, [http://www.catholic.org/international/international\\_story.php?id=24348](http://www.catholic.org/international/international_story.php?id=24348). Accessed 12 August 2007).

<sup>72</sup> Monsignor Filoni entered the Holy See’s diplomatic service in 1981 and has worked in Nunciatures to Sri Lanka, Iran, Brazil, in the Roman Curia and in the Philippines. In 2001 he was nominated Apostolic Nuncio to Jordan and Iraq and, in 2006, Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines. (*Holy See News Services*, “Nomina del Sostituto per gli Affari Generali della Segreteria di Stato”, 9 June 2007,

assigned to the nunciature in the Philippines but based in Hong Kong where he officially was on “a study mission.”<sup>73</sup> During his time there, Filoni was John Paul II’s emissary, reaching out to Chinese bishops, official and non-official, and “reconciling the vast majority to the Holy See.”<sup>74</sup> Apparently, the appointment of the Italian clergyman represents a setback for the ‘Party of Compromise’. Filoni, in fact, is a close friend of Joseph Zen and has been the main sponsor of the latter for his assignation to the bishopric of Hong Kong.<sup>75</sup> In any case, it would be misleading to consider the nomination of Filoni as a mere endorsement of the ‘Party of Principles’. The Pope plausibly expects that the new Substitute will use his authority and profound knowledge of China to reconcile the two factions and make them work together for the common end, namely winning both actual religious freedom for Chinese Catholics and normalizing relations with the PRC.

Finally, the issuing of the Papal letter to the Chinese Catholics has eliminated some of the ambiguities that until then had nourished the dispute between the two factions. Benedict XVI probably believes that clarity is the best remedy against the onset of discord within the Church. On the one hand, the Pope has made very clear that the relationship the Apostolic See wants to establish with the PRC is one primarily motivated by religious considerations. The Holy See hopes that Beijing can progressively accord actual religious freedom to Catholics in China and permit them to spread the Gospel without being persecuted. In other words, diplomatic relations with China are not to be sought in order to increase the power and

---

[http://212.77.1.245/news\\_services/bulletin/news/20370.php?index=20370&po\\_date=09.06.2007&lang=ge#NOMINA%20DEL%20SOSTITUTO%20PER%20GLI%20AFFARI%20GENERALI%20DELLA%20SEGRETERIA%20DI%20STATO](http://212.77.1.245/news_services/bulletin/news/20370.php?index=20370&po_date=09.06.2007&lang=ge#NOMINA%20DEL%20SOSTITUTO%20PER%20GLI%20AFFARI%20GENERALI%20DELLA%20SEGRETERIA%20DI%20STATO). Accessed 11 June 2007).

<sup>73</sup> Fernando Filoni as quoted in Gerard O’Connell, “Key Vatican appointment signals that Benedict’s chosen team fully in place”.

<sup>74</sup> *Asianews.it*, “Msgr. Fernando Filoni is the new substitute for the Secretary of State”, 6 June 2007, <http://www.asianews.it/index.php?l=en&art=9507&size=A>. Accessed 11 June 2007.

<sup>75</sup> Cardinal Zen was reportedly extremely pleased with the appointment of Filoni. (Confidential source sighted by Professor Richard Herr).

influence of the Apostolic See, but to achieve actual religious freedom for Chinese Catholics, that is to serve the spiritual mission of the Church. On the other hand, Benedict XVI's message unequivocally conveys the desire to open channels for dialogue with Beijing and, by this means, build a relationship based on mutual respect and understanding. The overall style and tone of the Papal letter makes it an earnest invitation to dialogue. It then implies that confrontational statements and attitudes towards the Chinese authorities are to be avoided by clerics and laypeople in charge of, or involved in, relations with China. In sum, the Papal letter upholds both the firm defence of the Church's principles and the indispensability of a respectful and patient dialogue. At the same time, it rejects the worst aspects of the two factions: the stubborn intransigence of the 'Party of Principles' and the cynical compliance of the 'Party of Compromise'.

### *Conclusion*

After having won the loyalty of the large majority of the 'official' Chinese clergy, Rome is now pursuing unity between two groups still determined to impose their views on the *Sinopolitik* of the Holy See. It is too early to say if the measures implemented by the Pope and his close collaborators will be successful. Certainly, these measures have sensibly contributed to a diminution in the disruptive potential for confrontation between the two parties. Were the dichotomy to be eventually reduced to unity, one great obstacle to overcoming the diplomatic stalemate with China would have been removed. The Catholic Church could deal with the Chinese authorities as a unitary interlocutor and the latter could not take advantage of the internal divisions of the Church any more. Therefore, Benedict XVI's appeal for

unity seems to be taking the energy out of the internal debate between the two factions.

UNIVERSITY OF TAS LIBRARY

## ***- Chapter VI -***

### ***The Conflict of Authority between the Party-State and the Catholic Church: Confucian Obedience versus Libertas Ecclesiae***

#### ***Introduction***

While the previous chapter has presented and investigated the main endogenous (internal to the Catholic Church) cause of the continuation of the diplomatic stalemate between the Holy See and the PRC, this chapter is devoted to the analysis of the major exogenous (external to the Catholic Church) cause of the diplomatic impasse between Rome and Beijing: the conflict of authority between the Catholic Church and the Chinese state. This conflict is a multifaceted and multilevel one, the understanding of which requires a preliminary diachronic excursus on the principles of China's religious policy, from the Imperial era to present day. In fact, only starting from the idiosyncrasies of Chinese rulers' approach towards religion it is possible to fathom the complexity of the differences between the institutional and doctrinal reality of the Catholic Church and the institutional and ideological reality of the Party-State.



Historically China has always been multi-religious and without any single 'state religion'. The Chinese rulers, in fact, never sanctioned a sole religion, but rather permitted the coexistence of various religious groups with the aim of not allowing anyone of them to become predominant or develop into an influential political force. At the same time, Chinese sovereigns claimed to reign by Heaven's mandate,<sup>1</sup> which made them the legitimate repositories of power as well as the guardians of truth. In more elegant words: "their governing principles derived from pre-modern norms of cosmic harmony that integrates all of social reality into an organic whole."<sup>2</sup> The heavenly mandate included the rulers' prerogative to declare which beliefs, values and social formations were admissible and which were not. Religious groups that were either not approved by the rulers or which subsequently refused to accept the supreme Imperial authority, even in the religious sphere, were labelled as 'evil cults' and banned. In addition, Emperors attempted to capture legitimacy through sponsorship/control of Chinese folk religions. In Imperial China there was a bureaucratic body, the Board of Rites, in charge of admitting popular deities into the pantheon of state-sanctioned gods.<sup>3</sup> Whenever the Board of Rites

---

<sup>1</sup> The doctrine of the Mandate of Heaven (T'ien Ming in Chinese) is a feudalistic political theory formulated to defend monarchy, originally developed in the Zhou Dynasty in China, around 1000 BC, as a method to legitimize their rule. In its early form, this political theory asserted that Heaven, *T'ien*, was primarily interested in the welfare of human beings. For this reason it has established governors and rulers who assume the responsibility for the welfare of their people. It mandates that certain people be in charge; while they rule justly, fairly, and wisely, Heaven maintains that certain rulers or dynasties remain in power. If a dynasty or ruler ceases to rule justly or wisely and begins to rule only with their own self-interests at heart, then Heaven removes the mandate from that ruler or mandate and passes it on to another family, who are then required to revolt and overthrow the dynasty (Richard Hooker, "T'ien Ming - The Mandate of Heaven", *China Glossary - Washington State University*, 1996, <http://wsu.edu/~dee/GLOSSARY/TIENMING.HTM>. Accessed 22 June 2007).

<sup>2</sup> Jason Kindopp, "Jason Kindopp's Commentary on Religious Freedom", *Religion & Ethics Newsweekly*, 15 February 2002, <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/week524/kindopp.html>. Accessed 8 September 2007.

<sup>3</sup> Italian Sinologist Ilaria Maria Sala points out that: "the activity of selection and revision of the deities that the people were authorised to worship, carried on over the centuries, also contributed to

recognized a particularly powerful popular god, that deity was then awarded an honorific title and admitted to the official pantheon. The state encouraged popular worship of only those deities that promoted law-abiding conduct among the people. Worship of deities with a potential for fostering political unrest was sternly prohibited. In substance, the Emperor - who had, among many other titles, the title of 'Son of Heaven'<sup>4</sup> - demanded that officially sanctioned faiths submit to his authority, thus recognizing the political order's ultimate competence in religious matters and entrusting it with the population's spiritual well-being. In accordance with this principle of superiority of state authority over religion, the civil power exercised authority in security matters without regard for religious concerns.<sup>5</sup>

In spite of the efforts of the authorities to 'domesticate' religion and use it as an *instrumentum regni*, religion was a significant source of resistance to Imperial rule, often in the form of secret societies attempting to remain aloof from official control, as well as through peasant uprisings inspired by religious devotion. Especially in periods of political and economic decay - characterized by rampant official corruption borne largely on the backs of China's peasantry - large segments of the population turned to chiliast religious sects to find salvation from their hardships. Not surprisingly, the combination of official repression and utopian beliefs has often led to political rebellion. Particularly since the XVIII century, China was racked by dozens of political rebellions, almost all of which were connected to

---

make more culturally homogeneous a country of enormous size, where the cultural differences, if left unaddressed, would have generated an even higher number of conflicts and secessions than those which have characterized the history of China." (Ilaria Maria Sala, *Il Dio dell'Asia. Religione e politica in Oriente. Un reportage*, Milano, Il Saggiatore, 2006, pp. 224-225).

<sup>4</sup> The nature of the Imperial power was thus presented as 'divine'.

<sup>5</sup> Kim-Kwong Chan, "China Socioeconomic Changes and the Implications for the Religion-State Dynamic in China", *Brigham Young University Law Review*, No. 2, 2004, pp. 325-356.

some form of religious organization.<sup>6</sup> In order to prevent religious groups from becoming the catalyst of political revolt, the authorities were constantly watchful and profoundly suspicious of religions, particularly of 'foreign' religions like Catholicism, which was, as explained in Chapter Two, eventually banned by Emperor Kangxi in 1721. Initially, the political neutrality and the law-abiding demeanour of Catholic missionaries won the favour of the Emperor, who in 1692 decreed: "The Europeans are very quiet; they do not excite any disturbances in the provinces, they do no harm to anyone, they commit no crimes, and their doctrine has nothing in common with that of the false sects in the empire, nor has it any tendency to excite sedition. [...] therefore let no one henceforth offer them any opposition"<sup>7</sup> However, the stance of the Emperor changed radically after the issuing of the 1715 Papal bull forbidding Chinese Catholics to take part in Confucian rituals. The Papal edict, being an order to Chinese subjects from a foreign monarch, was considered by Kangxi an insufferable challenge to his authority. For this reason he decided to ban Christian missions in China, officially justifying his decision on grounds of 'cultural incompatibility'. Kangxi noted: "Reading this proclamation, I have concluded that the Westerners are petty indeed. It is impossible to reason with them because they do not understand larger issues as we understand them in China. [...] to judge from this proclamation, their religion is no different from other small, bigoted sects of Buddhism or Taoism. I have never seen a document which contains so much nonsense. From now on, Westerners should not be allowed to preach in China to avoid further trouble."<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> The most famous of those rebellions certainly was the 'Boxer Revolution' at the beginning of the XX century.

<sup>7</sup> Emperor Kangxi as quoted in Simon Neill, *A History of Christian Missions*, Harmondsworth (UK), Penguin Books, 1964, pp. 189-190.

<sup>8</sup> Emperor Kangxi as quoted in Dan J. Li, *China in Transition, 1517-1911*, New York, Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1969, p. 22.

After their coming to power in 1949, the Chinese Communists combined their predecessors' traditional distrustful attitude towards religious groups with the negative outlook that Marxism has towards religion. The CPC in fact adheres to the Marxist doctrine of historical materialism.<sup>9</sup> This theory assumes that religion is one of the epiphenomena of a pre-socialist stage of social development and that it will inevitably die off with the advent of the Communist society. Consistently, during the first thirty years of the PRC, the Chinese authorities regarded religion as a distorted worldview hindering social progress and actively pursued its eradication - even with iconoclast fury during the years of the Cultural Revolution. During the Maoist decades, when leftist ideology prevailed within the Party, the advent of the Communist stage was proclaimed to be nigh. Therefore, there was a very low degree of tolerance for such ideological heterodoxies and 'cultural relics' as religion. In contrast, since 1978, with the accession to power of Deng Xiaoping, socialism has been seen in its early stages and there has been greater tolerance for intellectual and cultural diversity, including religion, which was allowed to resurface as part of the general post-Cultural Revolution normalization.<sup>10</sup>

Eradication of religion, however, remained the long-term objective of the Communist leadership. If the objective did not change, nonetheless the government adopted a more sophisticated strategy to achieve it. The Chinese leaders were convinced that religion would be extinguished naturally as progress was made in

---

<sup>9</sup> Historical (or dialectic) materialism is a term applied by Karl Marx to his theory of society and history. 'Historical' entailed the analysis of how particular forms of society had come into existence, and the specific historical contexts within which apparently universal or eternal social forms - state, religion, market, et cetera - were located. 'Materialism' denoted the rejection of Hegelian idealism and the primacy of socio-economic processes and relations. (Gordon Marshall, *Dictionary of Sociology*, London, Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 177-178).

<sup>10</sup> "The Third Plenum of the 11<sup>th</sup> CPC Central Committee in 1978 supported conclusions on the decline of class struggle. This led in turn to gradual acceptance of broader diversity of social and economic practices, including a relaxation of Party policy on religion". (Pitman B. Potter, "Belief in Control: Regulation of Religion in China", *The China Quarterly*, No. 174, July 2003, p. 319).

social and economic development of the Socialist society, as distorted and unscientific worldviews would become less and less able to attract superstitious and ignorant masses.<sup>11</sup> The government was also confident that allowing religious believers to practise their religion would rally their support for the construction of a progressive society, and that this would lead to the diminishing of the breeding ground of religion. In brief, permitting religious practice in China would lead to the decline of religion in the longer term.<sup>12</sup> The enjoyment of religious freedom was, in any case, permitted within the bounds drawn by the CPC, namely submission to the control and the authority of the Party-State.

This policy of limited tolerance for religion was outlined in the letter of Article 36 of the 1982 PRC Constitution:

*Citizens of the People's Republic of China enjoy freedom of religious belief. / No state organ, public organization or individual may compel citizens to believe in, or not to believe in, any religion: nor may they discriminate against citizens who believe in, or do not believe in any religion. / The state protects normal religious activities. No one may make use of religion to engage in activities that disrupt public order, impair the health of citizens or interfere with the educational system of the state / Religious bodies and religious affairs are not subject to any foreign domination.*<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> The edited version of the previously mentioned Document No. 19, published by the official Party journal *Red Flag* in June 1982, contains a brief but elucidating account of the Party-State's concept of religion: "Religion is a historical phenomenon pertaining to a definite period in the development of human society. It has its own cycle of emergence, development and demise". Insofar this phenomenon has existed in time, "the earliest mentality reflected the low level of production and the sense of awe toward natural phenomena of primitive peoples." (Document No. 19 as quoted in Anthony C. Yu, *State and Religion in China*, Chicago, Carus Publishing Company, 2005, p. 1).

<sup>12</sup> Kim-Kwong Chan, "Religion in China in the Twenty-First Century: Some Scenarios", *Religion, State and Society*, Vol. 33, No. 2, June 2005, pp. 87.

<sup>13</sup> *Constitution of the People's Republic of China*, 4 December 1982, Article 36.

Thus, since the Deng era Chinese citizens, at least on paper, have ceased to risk incarceration or other forms of punishment solely on the ground of believing in a religion. Nevertheless, as noted by Pitman B. Potter, while the Constitution recognizes *only* the freedom of religious belief, religious behaviour is actually limited by a close-knit net of 'doctrinal' and legal restraints.<sup>14</sup> As explained by Peng Zhen, then Vice-Chair of the Committee to Revise the Constitution, from a political viewpoint, the common principles of patriotism and allegiance to Socialism bind believers as well as non-believers. Moreover, from a legal perspective, Article 33 of the Constitution predicates the exercise of the rights of citizens on their performance of the "duties prescribed by the constitution and the Law."<sup>15</sup> As pointed out by Peng Zhen in *People's Daily*, these duties include supporting the Four Cardinal Principles, which impose a duty to uphold the socialist road, the dictatorship of the proletariat, the leadership of the Party, Marxism-Leninism and Maoist thought.<sup>16</sup> Thus, the freedom granted to religious believers remained conditional not only on obedience to the state's law, but also on submission to the policies and decisions of the Party.

The PRC's religious policy was outlined in the previously mentioned Document No. 19, issued in 1982. While stating the right of religious belief, the document neatly favoured atheism and committed the Party to actively promote non-belief.

---

<sup>14</sup> Pitman B. Potter, "Belief in Control: Regulation of Religion in China", p. 326.

<sup>15</sup> This provision was preserved in the 1988, 1993 and 1999 amendments.

<sup>16</sup> On 30 March 1979 Deng Xiaoping gave a speech in which he listed The Four Cardinal Principles were stated by in a political speech and are the four issues for which debate was not allowed within the People's Republic of China. These are: 1) The principle of upholding the socialist path; 2) the principle of upholding the people's democratic dictatorship; 3) the principle of upholding the leadership of the Communist Party of China; 4) the principle of upholding Marxist-Leninist-Mao Zedong thought. The Four Cardinal Principles actually marked a relaxation of control over ideology. In stating the four cardinal principles, the implication was that these four topics could not be questioned, but other political ideas not in the list could be discussed. Moreover, while the principles themselves are not subject to debate, the interpretation of those principles is. (Benjamin Yang, *Deng: A Political Biography*, London, M.E. Sharpe, 1997, pp. 207-208).

For this reason, Party members were not allowed to believe in or to participate in a religion. In an effort to outlaw folk religions and cults, the document recognized only five religions (as previously stated, Daoism, Buddhism, Islam, Catholicism and Protestantism). Document No. 19 strictly limited the capacity of religious groups to proselytize and raise funds. The education of the clergy and the administration of religious organizations were put under the supervision of the Party. In essence, Document No. 19 reflects the CPC's primary concern with social control and the preoccupation with keeping religious organizations loyal to the Party and its political line.

In 1990 Jiang Zemin seemed to take an even more positive approach towards religion. After publicly highlighting that "the resolution of issues of religion would have significance for national stability, ethnic unity and the promotion of socialist culture,"<sup>17</sup> he summoned the leaders of the five government-sanctioned religious organizations and briefed them on the advisability of tolerance of religious activity conforming to Party policy and the necessity to repress deviant beliefs. Jiang's idea of coopting believers and, at the same time, suppressing the challenges to the power of CPC informed the 1991 Document No. 6, issued by the Party Central Committee and the State Council. While stressing the principle of non-interference in the *normal*<sup>18</sup> religious activities or the internal affairs of religious organizations, the document directed the public security bodies to thwart groups using religious activities to "engage in disruptive activities, stir up trouble, endanger public safety,

---

<sup>17</sup> Jiang Zemin as quoted in Pitman B. Potter, "Belief in Control: Regulation of Religion in China", p. 321.

<sup>18</sup> While the mention of the principle of non-interference seems a sign of good disposition, the clarification that the former protects only 'normal' activities reveals the Party's determination to relegate religion to the limits of law. As noted by University of Chicago's Professor Anthony C. Yu, with his highly specific concept of religion, the present Chinese rulers are 'using religion to police and regulate religion' just as Chinese Emperors have done for millennia.

and weaken the unification of the country and national unity [...] or collude with hostile forces outside the country to endanger China security.”<sup>19</sup> The emphasis on national unity and security mirrored the Party leadership’s belief that, since the 1980s, one of the means employed by the Western powers to subvert Communist governments was to tie religious questions with internal dissent or clandestine opposition organizations. From the CPC’s viewpoint, religion was an instrument used by foreign ‘counter-revolutionary’ forces to achieve the ‘Westernization’ and ‘fragmentation’ of China.<sup>20</sup>

The official line on religion was reaffirmed in the aforementioned 1997 white paper on freedom of religious belief. This document also reasserted the corollaries of historical materialism that applied to the question of religion. The white paper, in fact, required that “religion should be adapted to the society where it is prevalent” and that religions must “conduct their activities within the sphere prescribed by law and adapt to social and cultural progress.”<sup>21</sup> In accordance with these principles, the government renewed its determination to act against those religious groups which were “a serious danger to the normal life and productive activities of the people” or which “severely endanger the society and the public interest.”<sup>22</sup> This legalistic approach was restated by Director Wang Zhaoguo at the United Front Work Department’s 1999 national conference: “We must comprehensively and correctly implement the Party’s religious policy, strengthen administration of religious affairs according to law, and actively guide religions to

---

<sup>19</sup> Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and State Council, *Document No. 6: Circular on some problems concerning further improving work on religion*, 5 February 1991, pp. 434-437.

<sup>20</sup> Beatrice Leung, “The Sino-Vatican Negotiations: Old Problems in a New Context”, *China Quarterly*, No. 153, March 1998, pp. 128-140.

<sup>21</sup> State Administration for Religious Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, *Freedom of Religious Belief*.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*



adapt to socialist society.”<sup>23</sup> The government’s message to the religious groups was clear; religions in China had two options: ‘adapt (submit) and survive’ or ‘resist and die’. However, Director Wang’s words reveal that Chinese religious policy, because of its strong ideological connotation, was intended to have not only a coercive function, but also an educational purpose. In fact, it should be remembered that philosophically the Party sees itself as a political *and* moral institution, with a role of guiding the social forces of China, including religious formations, towards the Communist society.<sup>24</sup>

The accession of China to the World Trade Organization (WTO) marked an adjustment towards pragmatism in religious policy.<sup>25</sup> Jiang Zemin called a *National Work Conference on Religious Affairs*, which was held in December 2001. The conference - attended by all members of the Politburo as well as by the heads of all branches of the Government, the CPC and the military<sup>26</sup> - sanctioned the new importance of religion, until then regarded as a minor social issue. The Party had realized that religion, paraphrasing a statement made by a prominent Yugoslav Communist in 1985, ‘was there and was going to be there for a long time’.<sup>27</sup> Religious groups, constantly gaining new adherents, were becoming significant social and cultural forces whose relevance needed to be given due consideration.

---

<sup>23</sup> Wang Zhaoguo as quoted in Pitman B. Potter, “Belief in Control: Regulation of Religion in China”, p. 331.

<sup>24</sup> *Xinhua News Agency*, “Full text of Constitution of Communist Party of China”, 25 October 2007, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2007-10/25/content\\_6944738.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2007-10/25/content_6944738.htm). Accessed 25 October 2007.

<sup>25</sup> The PRC’s accession to WTO – an organization informed by liberal ‘values’ – prodded the Chinese leadership not only to come to terms with the global market economy, but also to deal with the Western ethos of liberty based on the ideas of democracy and individual freedom (Junning Liu, “The New Trinity: The Political Consequences of the WTO, PNTR and Internet in China”, *Perspectives*, Vol. 3, No. 4, March 2002,

[http://www.oycf.org/perspectives/16\\_033102/new\\_trinity.htm](http://www.oycf.org/perspectives/16_033102/new_trinity.htm). Accessed 15 September 2007).

<sup>26</sup> Kim-Kwong Chan, “Religion in China in the Twenty-First Century: Some Scenarios”, p. 89.

<sup>27</sup> The original statement, made by *Praesidium of the League of Yugoslav Communists* member Dusan Dragosavac commenting on an alleged series of Marian apparitions, reads: “We have no illusions, religion is here and will be here for a long time”. (Dusan Dragosavac as quoted in Eric O. Hanson, *The Catholic Church in World Politics*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1987 p. 220).

Coming to terms with the ineffectiveness of a purely repressive or legalistic religious policy, the delegates at the conference agreed on the necessity of a more 'Dengist' and utilitarian approach to religion, analogous to the CPC's stance on the economy by which it adopted the market economy, renaming it 'Socialism with Chinese characteristics'. Similarly, the idea of 'religion with Chinese characteristics' (an expression, *nota bene*, which has never been employed by any government or Party official) fundamentally involves "tolerating religion and making the best use of it."<sup>28</sup> The December 2001 workshop thus inaugurated a policy of *congaement*<sup>29</sup> with religion, the salient points of which, according to Hong Kong scholar Kim-Kwong Chan, are: 1) recognition of religion; 2) containment of religious activity; 3) guidance of religious development; 4) suppression of non-sanctioned religions.<sup>30</sup> The post-WTO religious policy was further articulated after the adoption of Jiang Zemin's theory of the 'Three Represents',<sup>31</sup> as the new Party orthodoxy at the Sixteenth CPC Congress in 2002. In fact, in spring 2003, SARA issued several documents enunciating the conformation of religious policy to the new Party doctrine. The main directives emerging from these documents were: 1) "The CPC should actively guide religion to adapt to socialist society;" 2) Since the critical issue for religion in China is its

---

<sup>28</sup> Kim-Kwong Chan, "Religion in China in the Twenty-First Century: Some Scenarios", p. 90.

<sup>29</sup> The term 'congaement' identifies a policy that combines containment and engagement. It was coined by Condoleezza Rice in 2000 to define the United State's approach towards the PRC. (Condoleezza Rice, "Promoting the National Interest", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 79, No. 1, January-February 2000, pp. 45-62).

<sup>30</sup> Kim-Kwong Chan, "China Socioeconomic Changes and the Implications for the Religion-State Dynamic in China", p. 337.

<sup>31</sup> In July 2001, Jiang Zemin delivered a speech at the Central Party School, formally introducing the concept of the 'Three Represents' which calls for some fundamental changes in inner-Party democracy and ideology. According to the 'Three Represents' theory, the CPC should represent the demands for the development of the so-called "advanced productive forces," the direction of the "advanced culture," and the "fundamental interests of the greatest majority of the people". The most relevant implication of the new doctrine was that new classes of citizens, notably entrepreneurs and other emergent social groups, were allowed to join workers, peasants, and intellectuals as members of the Party. Ideology, not class, became the new criterion for Party membership. (James Mulvenon, "The PLA and the 'Three Represents': Jiang's Bodyguards or Party-Army?", *China Leadership Monitor*, No. 4, Fall 2002, pp. 1-11).

mass nature and its longevity, “the CPC should vigorously implement its policy on religious belief;” 3) The Party “should emphasise the legislative nature of religious policy and stress the independent nature of religion in China.”<sup>32</sup>

These Party directives reveal that, as anticipated above, the religious policy inaugurated in 2001 was essentially bifocal, having *engagement* and *containment* as its two ‘beacons’ and lines of action. Engagement of religion is aimed towards rendering religious groups into social forces that the government uses for its political objectives. It is to be achieved through the systematic subjection of religious organizations to the political guidance of the Party and by placing them under the supervision of governmental bodies.<sup>33</sup> The idea that religion can be very useful if it is subject to the guidance of the CPC reflects the thinking of the most pragmatic circles within the Party, according to which religion is one of the socio-cultural instruments that the Party uses to gather consensus and pursue its political agenda. In other words, after undergoing a process of ‘nazionalization’ and political neutralization, the ‘opium of the masses’ can be used as a corroborant for the CPC’s rule. This outlook on religion is epitomized by an article published in December 2001 by Pan Yue, then Director of the State Council Office for economic Restructuring and also an important figure in the CPC’s youth wing.<sup>34</sup> Pan suggested that the Party end its long-established policy of exclusion of religious believers from CPC membership<sup>35</sup> and acknowledge that religion has “psychological, cultural and moral functions, as well as numerous uses, such as

---

<sup>32</sup> Kim-Kwong Chan, “Religion in China in the Twenty-First Century: Some Scenarios”, p. 89.

<sup>33</sup> The CPCA is a paradigmatic example of this policy of state control over religious groups.

<sup>34</sup> Pitman B. Potter, “Belief in Control: Regulation of Religion in China” p. 323.

<sup>35</sup> The only exception to this rule is if a religious believer is a member of an ethnic minority.

services and public welfare.”<sup>36</sup> He also suggested that the Party should “abandon the policy of consistently suppressing and controlling religion and adopt a [policy] of unity and guidance and take advantage of the unifying power and appeal of religion to serve the CPC regime.”<sup>37</sup>

However, from the viewpoint of the Party, containment of religion is a *sine qua non* for its political viability. The strategic goal of engagement of religion must thus be pursued through containment tactics. The containment policy of the Chinese government is essentially founded upon three concepts: adaptation, legislation and independence. The idea of the adaptation of religions to the socio-political system has been constantly reaffirmed in several documents in the last decade. Although this process of adaptation has often been presented as mutual, it appears that the Party sees it as a one-way process, in the sense that religions, for the sake of adaptation with socialist society, should be ‘flexible’ to the point of changing or bending their doctrines in order to satisfy the political criteria set by the CPC.<sup>38</sup> Therefore, what the Party actually demands from religious groups is conformity or, using the byword of President Hu Jintao, ‘harmonization’<sup>39</sup> rather

---

<sup>36</sup> Pan Yue as quoted in Pitman B. Potter, “Belief in Control: Regulation of Religion in China” p. 323.

<sup>37</sup> Ibidem

<sup>38</sup> For instance, “Beijing has imposed on the Tibetan Buddhists a State-sponsored Panchen Lama after arresting the legitimate Panchen Lama chosen by the Tibetan Buddhists in accordance with their religious traditions. And it is waiting for the Dalai Lama to die so that it could similarly impose a State-sponsored successor on the Tibetans.” (Bahukutumbi Raman, “Anti-Christian Violence in Parts of India”, *Sapra India Foundation*, 31 January 1999, [http://www.subcontinent.com/sapra/research/internal/n\\_1999\\_01\\_31.html](http://www.subcontinent.com/sapra/research/internal/n_1999_01_31.html). Accessed 16 September 2007).

<sup>39</sup> As a 1996 internal Party document entitled “Some Hot Issues in Our Work on Religion” illustrates, religion must adjust its “theology, conception, and organization” and interpret its canon and doctrine “in the interests of socialism.” (Luo Shuze, “Some Hot Issues in Our Work on Religion”, Internal document published under the auspices of the theoretical journal of the Chinese Communist Party, ‘Qiushi’, [No. 5, 1996], as quoted in Mickey Spiegel, “China: State Control of Religion”, *Human Rights Watch*, October 1997, [http://www.hrw.org/reports/1997/china1/#P247\\_26119](http://www.hrw.org/reports/1997/china1/#P247_26119). Accessed 11 September 2007).

than adaptation.<sup>40</sup> The emphasis on legislation as the main instrument for attaining the above-mentioned ‘adaptation’ is an element of continuity with the legalistic religious policy outlook of the 1990s. In sum, the Party has decided to continue using legislative means to restrict organized religions and their activities to an innocuous scope.<sup>41</sup> In fact, just like the Emperors in the past centuries, the Communist government grants itself the authority to decide through legislation which religions are permitted and which ones are not. Equally, it claims the exclusive right to define, again through legislation, what religious activities are ‘normal’ and what are not. The first prerogative entails that non-state-approved religious groups are illegal and can be pursued as ‘evil cults’ under the 1997 Criminal Law.<sup>42</sup> In addition, it also implies the right to outlaw segments of state recognized religions which resist the government’s supervision. The second prerogative enables the civil power to put a *cordon sanitaire* around religious groups in order to cut them off from all the ambits of the public domain over which the state wants to exert its ‘monopolistic’ control: education, marriage, demographic policy, social morality, et cetera. The government’s choice of using legislation as the primary means to deal with organized religions also reveals the influence of the two main traditional schools of Chinese legal thought, Legalism and Confucianism, on the CPC’s religious policy. Legalism emphasizes the

---

<sup>40</sup> As highlighted in a report by *Human Rights Watch*, “the principle of adaptation undermines freedom of religious belief by insisting that any principles and doctrines of the five recognized religions that do not conform to socialism should be changed. Expressions of faith that the government does not recognize as ‘normal’ are subject to punishment.” (Mickey Spiegel, “China: State Control of Religion”).

<sup>41</sup> Sometimes, the use of legislation leads to surreal situations. For example, in August 2007 the SARA has issued a set of regulations which strictly stipulate the procedures by which Buddhist monks are to reincarnate. According to a statement issued by the SARA, the law “is an important move to institutionalize management of reincarnation of living Buddhas”. (*Xinhua News Agency*, “Reincarnation of living Buddha needs gov’t approval”, 4 August 2007, [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2007/08/04/content\\_5448242.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2007/08/04/content_5448242.htm). 5 September 2007).

<sup>42</sup> Article 300 of the PRC Criminal Law punishes the use of superstitious sects, secret societies, or evil cult organizations to “undermine the implementation of the laws and administrative rules and regulations of the State” (People’s Republic of China, *Criminal Law of the People’s Republic of China*, Art. 300, 14 March 1997, <http://www.colaw.cn/findlaw/crime/criminallaw1.html>. 7 September 2007).

importance of *fa* (written laws) and *xing* (punishments) as essential means of imposing order, and Confucianism maintains that while rites should govern most relationships between people,<sup>43</sup> law is reserved for relations between subjects and the state and for those who do not observe rites.<sup>44</sup> In other words, law is only for 'social outcasts' and potentially subversive and devious organizations and is necessary to keep them under control.<sup>45</sup> Therefore, the current legalist approach towards religion betrays the deep suspicion that, traditionally, Chinese rulers nourish for religious groups.

The third leg of the 'containment tripod' is the idea of independence. Although independence has been a traditional *leitmotiv* of the CPC's religious policy since Mao's time, within China's current social context there are new elements that, according to the Chinese establishment, require a renewed effort to curb the penetration of 'exogenous' religious ideas in the Middle Kingdom and limit, as much as possible, the influence that overseas-based religious organizations and powerhouses can exert on their adherents in China. Beijing's accession to the WTO has greatly hastened the momentum of structural changes within China's society and economy: Chinese borders have become more porous not only to foreign investments, but also to cultural influx from the rest of the world, including religions. The increased scale and intensity of cultural exchange with the outside world is favouring the penetration of new religious ideas and contacts between believers in China and their co-religionists in other countries. The new possibilities

---

<sup>43</sup> The Confucian Code of Rites (Liji) is expected to be the controlling document on civilized behaviour, not law.

<sup>44</sup> Hallie Fader, "The Chinese Legal Tradition: A Three-part Discussion of the Chinese Legal tradition", *ORIAS - University of California*, July 2004, [www.ias.berkeley.edu/orias/summer2004/summer2004Chinalegal.htm](http://www.ias.berkeley.edu/orias/summer2004/summer2004Chinalegal.htm). Accessed 12 September 2007.

<sup>45</sup> Henry C.K. Liu, "The Abduction of Modernity - Part 3: Rule of Law vs Confucianism", *Asia Times*, 24 July 2003, <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China/EG24Ad01.html>. Accessed 13 September 2007.

of coordination between the Chinese religious groups and their overseas counterparts are seen by the government as augmenting the 'risk' of Chinese believers being hetero-directed by foreign subjects rather than being 'guided' to pursue the socio-political agenda of the CPC. Therefore, the government is striving to keep religious groups 'independent', that is restraining them within a politically nationalistic framework. The set of regulations on Buddhist reincarnation, issued by the SARA in August 2007, are a clear example of the government's determination to prevent any foreign or non-state influence on religions. As declared by the SARA: "the selection of reincarnates must preserve national unity and solidarity of all ethnic groups and the selection process cannot be influenced by any group or individual from outside the country."<sup>46</sup> In sum, it seems that for the Chinese government, 'independence of the Church in China' actually means subjection to state control.

### *The Conflict of Authority between the Party-State and the Catholic Church*

The Catholic Church is a transnational religious organization which has a unified structure of authority and a formalized hierarchy of clergy professing exclusive loyalty to the Pope; it is deeply concerned about its doctrinal and sacramental integrity; it has a supreme government which enjoys international subjectivity; and its leader is also the sovereign of a state, the VCS. Moreover, the Catholic Church considers the *libertas Ecclesiae*, its independence from secular influence, as an essential condition for carrying out its divine mission and, for this reason, it rejects

---

<sup>46</sup> *Xinhua News Agency*, "Reincarnation of living Buddha needs gov't approval".

the very idea of union of Church and State.<sup>47</sup> In light of the above-outlined principles and objectives of the PRC's religious policy, a religious organization with these features is the exact opposite of the idea that the Party-State has of a tolerable religious entity. A conflict of authority between the Chinese political system - one that denies the legitimacy of any religious group which is not under the supervision of the state - and the Catholic Church is therefore inevitable and inherently acute. This conflict is complex and multi-layered and, although its nature is primarily 'ideological', it particularly reverberates in the jurisdictional and diplomatic spheres. However, in order to develop an understanding of the conflict of authority between the Chinese Party-State and the Catholic Church, it is essential to start from its ideological aspects. These aspects (and some of their practical implications) can be analyzed through the concepts of adaptation and independence, by using them as analytical tools to investigate the ideological motivations of the Chinese government's demand that the Catholic Church 'adapt to the Socialist reality' and be 'independent'.

As noted above, the Party-State requires all religious organizations to adapt to the Socialist system. Yet, the Chinese *regimen* has specific reasons for demanding the 'adaptation' of the Catholic Church. As noted by Chan and Potter, the Marxist outlook on religion deeply informs the religious policy of the Chinese government.<sup>48</sup> Marx lived in XIX century Europe, so his model of religious organization was moulded on that of the Judeo-Christian civilization to which he belonged: institutional hierarchy, clergy, canons, doctrines and traditions.<sup>49</sup> This model presupposes religious forces that - because of their high degree of structural

---

<sup>47</sup> Robert Sterling Meyer, *The Social Justice Mission of the Church: Thinking Globally, Acting Locally*, South Orange (USA), Seton Hall University, 2003, p. 27.

<sup>48</sup> Pitman B. Potter, "Belief in Control: Regulation of Religion in China", p. 325.

<sup>49</sup> Kim-Kwong Chan, "Religion in China in the Twenty-First Century: Some Scenarios", p. 104.



organization - compete with the state at the institutional and jurisdictional level even before being moral and ideological competitors. Such a model, albeit being grossly inadequate to deal with the new loosely-structured religious groups and cults which are currently propagating in China, is particularly applicable to the Catholic Church, a highly institutionalized entity with a solid hierocratic structure.<sup>50</sup> From this perspective, then, the Catholic Church is the religious organization *par excellence*, the one to which Marxist principles for dealing with religion should be strictly applied and the one which is likely to offer the fiercest resistance to the 'new Socialist order'.<sup>51</sup> Thus, if the Catholic Church can be brought (or forced) to adapt to the Socialist system, all other religious organizations can. This is the reason that, from the viewpoint of the PRC government, implementing a Marxist religious policy towards the Catholic Church - seen as the epitome of 'religion' and religious organization - means being consistent with the Party's ideology. On the contrary, adopting a compromising approach towards the Church would be tantamount to a betrayal of the Party's doctrine. This attitude towards the Catholic Church is the basis of the Chinese authorities' conviction that, in order to be authorized to operate within the PRC, the Church should strictly abide by China's restrictive religious legislation and adapt its institutional structure to that of the Socialist state, not the other way round. Thus, the Catholic Church, is not given any real opportunity to negotiate a mutually beneficial relationship with the Party-State. The PRC's leadership sees the relationship between Church and

---

<sup>50</sup> Max Weber, *Sociology of Rulership and Religion*, online edition by Moriyuki Abukuma, 2003, [http://www.ne.jp/asahi/moriyuki/abukuma/weber/society/ruler/ruler\\_relig/rul\\_rel\\_frame.html](http://www.ne.jp/asahi/moriyuki/abukuma/weber/society/ruler/ruler_relig/rul_rel_frame.html). Accessed 13 September 2007.

<sup>51</sup> Pedro Ramet, *Religion and Nationalism in Soviet and East European Politics*, Durham and London, Duke University Press, 1989, pp. 411-415.

state as “very similar to the relation of father and son in ancient China”:<sup>52</sup> the Church must unconditionally obey the Party-State.<sup>53</sup>

Adaptation is thus required from the Church first of all for ideological reasons, at least officially. On a more pragmatic note, though, the ideological drives for pursuing the adaptation of the Catholic Church to the socialist system have very concrete motivations in terms of maintaining the Party-State’s supremacy unchallenged. Chinese Communists, in fact, are aware that the Catholic Church is an institutional reality which, over the centuries, has represented a barrier to absolute power of the state, “a check on the pretensions of state power authorities”,<sup>54</sup> especially in the case of non-democratic regimes. Wherever the Church is able to obtain state recognition of its prerogative to order its life and ministry according to its own rules, it represents a countervailing authority to the state because it enjoys privileged autonomous spaces of conviction and action that are not subjected to secular jurisdiction.<sup>55</sup> These spaces can potentially be used to create and nourish free institutions and/or social formations whose activities can lay the basis for the transformation of a vocationally monist society<sup>56</sup> into a

---

<sup>52</sup> Jinghao Zhou, *Remaking China's Public Philosophy for the Twenty-First Century*, Westport (Connecticut), Greenwood Publishing Company, 2003, p. 145.

<sup>53</sup> The ‘father to son’ relationship is perhaps the most important of Confucius’ *five cardinal relationships*, being regarded as the model of Confucian familial, social and political relationships. In fact, according to Confucius, filial obedience is the keystone of social order and the root of good government: people should obey the rulers like they obey their parents. The other four cardinal relationships are: sovereign to subject, elder to younger brother, husband to wife, friend to friend. It should be noted that the first person stated in each relationship is the one to be respected (Yanxia Zhao, *Father and Son in Confucianism and Christianity. A Comparative Study of Xunzi and Paul*, Brighton (UK), Sussex Academic Press, 2007, pp. 98-102).

<sup>54</sup> George Weigel, “Papacy and Power”, *First Things*, February 2001, [http://www.firstthings.com/article.php3?id\\_article=2142](http://www.firstthings.com/article.php3?id_article=2142). Accessed 15 September 2007.

<sup>55</sup> Jose Casanova, “Civil society and religion: retrospective reflections on Catholicism and prospective reflections on Islam”, *Social Research*, Vol. 68, No. 4, Winter 2001, pp. 1041-1082.

<sup>56</sup> In a monist system the society is subject to a single power whose sovereignty is absolute, total, ultimate, and motivated in its exercise only by the *raison d'etat*. In such a system, the state permeates, penetrates, and controls the whole life of society to the extent that ‘state’ coincides with ‘society’. (John Courtney Murray, *From Religious Liberty: Catholic Struggles with Pluralism*, Louisville (USA), Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993).

pluralistic one.<sup>57</sup> The Church's capacity to make an essential contribution to the emergence of a civil society originates from the implementation of the above-mentioned principle of *libertas Ecclesiae*, the 'freedom of the Church'. Throughout history the Catholic Church has constantly upheld and defended its liberty against state power. *Libertas Ecclesiae*, has always been, especially in the last two centuries, the guiding principle of the Church's relationship with the modern state. Pontifical diplomacy and local Catholic hierarchies have always acted in order to elicit from every sympathetic or hostile regime the best possible conditions for advancing the Church's freedom and interest. Even when the Church had to accommodate to the reality of an unfriendly regime, it always regarded its institutional freedom and the religious freedom of the faithful as the minimal conditions for an agreement with the civil authorities. In the XX century, by "the appropriation of the modern discourse of universal human rights",<sup>58</sup> the Church has transferred the principle of *libertas Ecclesiae* to the human individual and to civil society,<sup>59</sup> enabling itself to play a crucial role in the constitution of civil societies and in democratization processes through Catholic social bodies. This potential to promote the creation of a pluralistic society is the main reason that the Chinese Communist government, being afraid to lose its monopoly of political power and to loosen its pervasive control over the Chinese society, is intransigently demanding

---

<sup>57</sup> "A pluralistic society is one in which life is segmented within the explicit consciousness of the members themselves into differentiated institutional components. In this type of society, family, religion, state, economy, and education are understood to be differentiated and autonomous realms of conduct and knowledge, even if they refer to a single social phenomenon." (Anthony J. Blasi, Andrew J. Weigert, "Towards a Sociology of Religion: An Interpretive Sociology Approach", *Sociological Analysis*, Vol. 37, No. 3, Autumn, 1976, pp. 194).

<sup>58</sup> Jose Casanova, "Civil society and religion: retrospective reflections on Catholicism and prospective reflections on Islam", p. 1066.

<sup>59</sup> Two examples of the centrality of human rights in the apostolate of the Catholic Church are John XXIII's 1961 encyclical *Mater et Magistra* and John Paul II's staunch defense of the 'sacred dignity of the human person'.

the 'adaptation' of the Catholic Church to the Socialist reality.<sup>60</sup> There is, however, a second (and subtler) reason for the Party-State's demand to direct ecclesial life in China. As previously noted, some sectors of the Chinese leadership have realized that religions can be used as social forces to further its political ends.<sup>61</sup> Therefore, the 'adaptation' of the Church would make it possible for the government to gather political consensus, consolidate the rule of the Party-State and curb the growth of civil society through the systematic occupation of the social spaces of a 'domesticated' Catholic Church. This is, in essence, the grand design that the PRC government is trying to achieve through the subjection of the 'official' segment of the Church in China to the control of an intersecting network of Party and governmental organizations - first of all the CPCA - and the repression of the 'clandestine' Catholics.

### *State Control Over Religion: an Hegelian and Marxist Concept*

The ideological drivers behind the State/Party's determined pursuit of an 'independent' Catholic Church in China can be better understood if they are investigated by using the theoretical concepts of two major Western philosophers of the XIX century, Georg Hegel and Karl Marx. The former theorized the totalising nature of statehood and described the political and religious

---

<sup>60</sup> Luo Shuze, "Some Hot Issues in Our Work on Religion", as quoted in Mickey Spiegel, "China: State Control of Religion". See also House of Representatives of the United States of America, *U.S./China Relations and Human Rights: is Constructive Engagement Working?* Hearing Before the Subcommittee on International operations and Human Rights of the Committee on International Relations of the House of Representatives, One Hundred Fifth Congress, First Session, 28 October 1997, p. 26.

<sup>61</sup> See the quotation of Pan Yue at page 10.

totalitarianism that, in his view, characterized what he called the 'Oriental States';<sup>62</sup> the latter, in his philosophy of state, partially adopted the totalitarian outlook of the former,<sup>63</sup> providing the ideological basis for the Party-State's determination to assert its exclusive control over the Catholic Church and the other religious groups in China.

A cardinal concept in Hegel's *The Philosophy of History* is that there is a World Spirit pervading and progressing the history of humankind. According to Hegel the concrete development of the World-Spirit is the National Spirit of the people, which he calls *Volkgeist*. The *Volkgeist* is imbedded in culture, which includes among others things, political conditions and traditions, morality, art, *religion* and philosophy. The unity of the National Spirit is realized in the state, which is nothing but the form in which the *Volkgeist* manifests itself. The state is thus the epiphany of the *Volkgeist*, and, for this reason, "it is the only institution fully expressing rationality and free will, through the drafting of laws and by exercising power."<sup>64</sup> This gives the government jurisdiction over virtually every social ambit, agency and behaviour. In the Hegelian state, in other words, individuals, families and social formations, including religious groups, are "totally subordinated to the law and the power of the state."<sup>65</sup> Hegel's ideal society is thus a perfectly monist one, dominated by a state which has both an immanent and transcendent nature. In

---

<sup>62</sup> Harvey Goldman, "Images of the others, Asia in Nineteenth Century Western Thought – Hegel, Marx and Weber", in Ainslie Thomas Embree and Carol Gluck, *Asia in Western and World History: A Guide for Teaching*, Armonk (USA), M.E. Sharpe, 1997, pp. 127-146.

<sup>63</sup> "[...] the followers of Karl Marx endow the State with omnipotence, making it the absolute lord over the citizen in all political and economic matters" (Franz Oppenheimer, *The State*, New York, Free Life Editions, 1975, p. 3. This book was first published in Germany in 1908).

<sup>64</sup> Paolo Scarafoni, *The Ethical State (According to Hegel's Philosophy)*, videoconference, Congregation for the Clergy, Rome, 29 October 2004.

<sup>65</sup> Ibidem

such a 'statolatric'<sup>66</sup> society there can be no real freedom for individuals or 'other than the state' groups.<sup>67</sup> For this reason, Hegel's philosophy of state is regarded as the keystone of the theories of state totalitarianism.<sup>68</sup> This statolatric conception resounds in Hegel's description of the Oriental nations, including China.<sup>69</sup> The German thinker highlights that in China, India and Persia the bestowal of power is considered as divinely inspired and the rulers are seen as harbingers of the gods. The orders of the rulers are thus to be obeyed because they are sanctioned by gods who are emanations of the Spirit.<sup>70</sup> People's obedience to the rulers then enables them to pursue the realization of the National Spirit in the state.<sup>71</sup>

In Hegel's thought, a harmonious (Oriental) society - borrowing again President Hu's favourite slogan - is then a society in which the orders of the rulers, seen as the custodians of Chinese *Volkgeist*,<sup>72</sup> are obeyed. Obedience and 'sacrality' of

---

<sup>66</sup> Statolatry, which combines idolatry with the state, first appeared in Giovanni Gentile's *Doctrine of Fascism*, published in 1931 under Mussolini's name. The same year, an encyclical by Pope Pius XI criticized Fascist Italy as developing "a true, a real pagan worship of the State - the 'Statolatry' which is no less in contrast with the natural rights of the family than it is in contradiction with the supernatural rights of the Church." (Pius XI, encyclical letter *Non Abbiamo Bisogno*, 29 June 1931, [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/pius\\_xi/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-xi\\_enc\\_29061931\\_non-abbiamo-bisogno\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_29061931_non-abbiamo-bisogno_en.html). Accessed 17 September 2007).

<sup>67</sup> This idea was clearly expressed by Benito Mussolini, who said: "All within the state, nothing outside the state, nothing against the state". (Benito Mussolini as quoted in Michael J. Oakeshott, *The Social and Political Doctrines of Contemporary Europe*, Cambridge (UK), Cambridge University Press, 1939, p. 165).

<sup>68</sup> However, English political philosopher Thomas Hobbes might be considered the forerunner of the idea of a totalising state. In fact, the original cover illustration of Hobbes' classic *Leviathan*, published in 1651, shows a huge king-like figure (the sovereign/state) wielding a mighty sword. A closer examination reveals that the body of the king is completely made up of minuscule people: the citizens. The citizens then, although being individuals, belong to the body of the sovereign/state (Sauvik Chakraverti, "Hobbes' Mistake - The Rational Case For Anarchy", *Times of India*, 26 May 2001, pp. 15-16).

<sup>69</sup> Georg W.F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, Kitchener (Canada), Batoche Books, 2001, pp. 132-155.

<sup>70</sup> Maxwell Felicilda, "The Unhistorical Historian: A Careful Examination of Hegel's Philosophy of History", *Diwatao*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2001, [http://www.geocities.com/philodept/diwatao/philosophy\\_of\\_history.htm](http://www.geocities.com/philodept/diwatao/philosophy_of_history.htm). Accessed 18 September 2007.

<sup>71</sup> Moreover, the German philosopher considered despotism as the 'natural' form of government for China (George D. O'Brien, *Hegel on Reason and History*, Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1975, pp. 60-68).

<sup>72</sup> Political power, thus, has a sort of 'sacral aura'. This is consistent with the aforementioned doctrine of the 'Mandate of Heaven'.

political power are then the foundations of social harmony and political stability. The omni-encompassing nature of the state, the 'sacral' dimension of the political power and the related subjects' duty to obey the rulers, and the subordination of religions to the power of the state are all elements that can be found not only in Imperial China but also in Communist China. The current Party-State leaders - the harbingers of Marx, Lenin, Mao, Deng and Jiang - demand the obedience of the whole Chinese nation, individuals as well as social groups, to carry out their 'sacred mission': the edification of Socialism, which can be regarded as the full realization of the Chinese National Spirit. Therefore a religious organization, as in past centuries, must be exclusively subject to the civil authorities in order to be considered by them as veritably Chinese. Indeed, the bureaucratic impulse to dominate and incorporate religion is deeply rooted in "China's centuries-old tradition of totalistic governance"<sup>73</sup> and has been handed down from the Confucian *literati* to the Communist cadres.

Although Karl Marx turned Hegelianism on its head,<sup>74</sup> there are still strong statolatric connotations in Marx's thought, especially regarding the stage of the 'dictatorship of the proletariat',<sup>75</sup> which is a term employed by Marxists to refer to a temporary state between the capitalist society and the classless and stateless Communist society. During this transition period the state consists of the revolutionary dictatorship of the working class, which seizes power and replaces the political system controlled by the bourgeoisie. From a theoretical outlook,

---

<sup>73</sup> Jason Kindopp, "Jason Kindopp's Commentary on Religious Freedom".

<sup>74</sup> Unlike Hegel, Marx did not make thought govern the world and did not see history as the gradual unfolding of the Spirit, but instead argued that all mental systems were the products of social and economic realities. To these realities he ascribed also religious beliefs and cultural expressions.

<sup>75</sup> The term does not refer to a concentration of power by a dictator, but to a situation where the proletariat (working class) would hold power and replace the political system controlled by the bourgeoisie.

China is now going through the phase of the dictatorship of the proletariat, under the guidance of the CPC that, as explained by *People's Daily*, is “the sole party in power in China. [...] the vanguard of the Chinese working class, [...] and the core of leadership over the socialist cause of China”<sup>76</sup> and has the monopoly of authority and power in China.<sup>77</sup> Due to the progressive relaxation of ideological and social controls over the last two decades, today's China is not the state with totalitarian characteristics that it used to be during the Maoist era. It is, however, an authoritarian reality where the Party-State, although tolerating the existence and the relative autonomy of ‘other than state’ social groups, demands them to submit to its direction and meet its political criteria. The PRC is then an authoritarian state in the sense that the government, though permitting the existence of (some) civil society's bodies, strictly limits their freedom and controls them. In the case of religious policy, however, the Party-State retains the totalitarian and statolatric attitude outlined in Hegel's discourse on the Oriental regimes. Because of the ‘sacral’ and omni-comprehensive nature of the Party-State, the government has the duty to achieve the incorporation of religions into the state apparatus in order to obliterate their ‘otherness’ and re-conduct them into the “One Being of the State supremely dominant.”<sup>78</sup> To pursue this objective the Party-State needs to: 1) put religious groups under its control; 2) ‘nationalize’ them by isolating them, hierarchically and even doctrinally, from the transnational religious network to which they (might) belong. Both these goals can be reached by attaining the ‘independence’ of the religious groups. ‘Independence’, as noted above, essentially means subjection to Party-State's authority and imperatives and isolation from transnational religious

---

<sup>76</sup> *People's Daily*, “The Communist Party of China (CPC)”, 2001, <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/data/organs/cpc.html>.

<sup>77</sup> From the Party's ideological point of view, the CPC ‘represents’ and ‘serves’ the people as well as ‘leads’ them.

<sup>78</sup> Georg W.F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, p. 137.



structures. Because of its doctrinal strength and sophistication, its universalism and its domestic and transnational organizational virtuosity, the Catholic Church has the capacity to successfully resist the efforts of the Chinese government to render it 'independent'. This irreducibility of the Church to the PRC's political and social order makes the conflict of authority between the Church and the Party-State increasingly acute and transforms a conflict over ideological differences into a confrontation/competition for leadership and jurisdiction.

As noted above, the CPC claims to be the political and *moral* leader of the whole Chinese nation, having a role of guidance of all social forces, including religious groups. The doctrine of Petrine Primacy, instead, requires all Catholics, including those in China, to accept the Roman Pontiff as their supreme religious and moral leader. For ideological and political reasons, the CPC cannot accept that Chinese Catholics have their loyalty diverted to the Pope, the head of another sovereign state and the head of a religious organization endowed with international subjectivity. On their part, for doctrinal reasons Chinese Catholics could not renounce their obedience to Rome as demanded by their government. From this 'clash of loyalties' originates a conflict over the ultimate moral leadership of Catholics in China. As Catholic Sinologist Beatrice Leung puts it: "Whom should the Chinese Catholics follow, the Party cadres in the communes or the bishops and priests in the Church, especially over controversial issues like family planning, civil marriage and other social problems?"<sup>79</sup> As previously explained, the Chinese leadership is convinced that the Catholic Church has a special potential to undermine the Party leadership and ideological authority and thus cause the end of the monopoly of power of the CPC. This perceived threat is amplified by the

---

<sup>79</sup> Beatrice Leung, "The Sino-Vatican Negotiations: Old Problems in a New Context", p. 135.

Party's lack of ideological self-confidence<sup>80</sup> and the by the claim of the Holy See to exercise authority over its clergy in organizational and theological terms, coupled with its sovereign status in international law. On the one hand, Christianity is considered one of the main intellectual weapons<sup>81</sup> of the 'foreign antagonistic forces' which, according to the Chinese authorities, since the 1980s have been aiming to "achieve pluralistic political beliefs through pluralistic religious beliefs"<sup>82</sup> in China in order to overthrow the CPC's rule. On the other hand, the Church's demand to train and exert authority over Catholic clergy and appoint bishops collides with the Chinese civil authorities' millennia-old tradition of selecting and appointing officials to lead the people and it is considered by the Chinese Communists a usurpation of the teaching authority that they believe should belong exclusively to the Party,<sup>83</sup> and even a violation of the sovereign prerogatives of the state. All these elements, to which can be added the steadily increasing number of Catholic converts at a time of ideological vulnerability, have sharpened the sense of urgency among China's authorities, who reacted by renewing their determination to put Chinese Catholics under their exclusive control, that is, to attain the 'independence' of the Catholic Church in China. The conflict over leadership has then become a conflict over jurisdiction.

---

<sup>80</sup> Many factors have contributed to the ideological insecurity of the CPC: the end of the Communist regimes in Eastern Europe in the 1990's, the irreversible cultural porosity of the Chinese society in a globalizing world, the decline in the share of the state in the economy (particularly after the accession of the PRC to the WTO), the corruption and abuse of privilege by the many Party cadres, the increasing economic and social polarization within China. The net effect of all these changes is to make Marxism less and less credible as an ideology legitimizing the CPC's rule.

<sup>81</sup> Christianity, in the perception of the Chinese Confucian scholar-officials and, subsequently, of Communist cadres had been closely linked with 'foreign cultural imperialism'.

<sup>82</sup> Luo Shuze, "Some Hot Issues in Our Work on Religion", as quoted in Mickey Spiegel, "China: State Control of Religion".

<sup>83</sup> Beatrice Leung, "Communist Party-Vatican Interplay Over the Training of Church Leaders in China", *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, Vol. 40, Issue 4, December 2001, pp. 659-660.

Consistent with the legalistic principle informing its religious policy, and with the Chinese traditional intolerance of non-state sanctioned religious organizations, the government has issued laws and regulations with the aim of keeping the ‘official’ segment of the Church in China under its jurisdiction and severing the ties between the ‘official’ Catholics and the Holy See. For example, the authorities devote particular attention to ensure that all religious education institutes of the ‘official’ segment of the Church strictly abide by the official directives and submit to Party leadership. The curricula, programmes and personnel of the ‘official’ seminaries must be approved by the SARA.<sup>84</sup> The government has also issued stricter regulations on the registration of all places of religious activity,<sup>85</sup> trying to make the registration its “key control mechanism.”<sup>86</sup> In addition, the CPCA has continued to implement its policy of elite cooptation within the ‘official’ Church, appointing bishops on the basis of their (supposed) political loyalty and ‘independence’ from the Holy See. The government has also tried to keep the ‘official’ Church under its control by acquiescing to the misappropriation, confiscation and sales of ecclesial property by the CPCA bureaucrats, who often use it for their own economic advantage.<sup>87</sup> This ‘economic persecution’ of the Church serves a double purpose: leading to a situation of economic dependency on the part of the Church with regard to the State<sup>88</sup> and giving the CPCA officials a

---

<sup>84</sup> Of course, the officially approved curricula incorporate state policy into religious instruction (Beatrice Leung, “Communist Party-Vatican Interplay Over the Training of Church Leaders in China”, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, Vol. 40, Issue 4, December 2001, p. 659).

<sup>85</sup> According to Regulation No. 145, issued by Premier Li Peng in 1994 and known as *Management of Places for Religious Activities*, “registration is based on the ‘three-fix’ policy: patriotic association, a fixed meeting point, and activities confined to a specific geographic area” (Jinghao Zhou, *Remaking China’s Public Philosophy for the Twenty-First Century*, p. 145).

<sup>86</sup> Jinghao Zhou, *Remaking China’s Public Philosophy for the Twenty-First Century*, p. 145.

<sup>87</sup> As reported by *Asianews.it*, “Church property, which the government has said it will return, is estimated to be worth thirteen billion euros. But the Religious Affairs Bureau, the Patriotic Association and local governments freely dispose of it and its revenues” (*Asianews.it*, “Church endures economic persecution as the Patriotic Association tries to seize Church property”, 9 March 2007, <http://www.asianews.it/index.php?l=en&art=7097#>. Accessed 21 March 2007).

<sup>88</sup> Alejandro Torres Gutierrez, “La financiación de la Iglesia Católica en España”, *Revista Española de Derecho Canónico*, Vol. 59, No. 153, 2002, pp. 877-892.

strong motivation for sabotaging, under the cloak of ideology and religious policy, the normalization of relations between the PRC and the Holy See.<sup>89</sup>

Despite the numerous legislative and repressive measures of the authorities - holding all 'official' faithful and clergy within the framework of a state-controlled organization, persecuting the 'underground' Catholics, reducing foreign contacts and forbidding communications with Rome - their strategy of controlling the Church seems to be far from successful. More and more Catholics, in fact, are able to circumvent the control mechanism created by the authorities. Consistent with the wishes of the Holy See, the mutual assistance and level of 'osmosis' between the 'underground' and 'official' segments of the Catholic Church in China are constantly augmenting, stepping up their capacity for coordinated action. This enables them to develop their own informal rules and procedures for organizing their religious life; not openly challenging the authorities but rather neutralizing them in a way that makes them increasingly irrelevant. In addition, thanks to their progress towards unity, Catholics belonging to both segments can reciprocally benefit from the wealth of international contacts and the international support that they have, especially through the 'bridge Churches' of Hong Kong and Taiwan.<sup>90</sup>

The material and moral support it receives from abroad, permits the Church in

---

<sup>89</sup> Dr Anthony Lam, a scholar based at the Holy Spirit Study Centre, clearly explains this situation: "Should relations with the Vatican be normalized, CPCA leaders know that they won't be any longer in control of the Church. For this reason, they are trying to make the most of the situation by selling Church property and pocketing the money" (Anthony Lam as quoted in *Asianews.it*, "Church endures economic persecution as the Patriotic Association tries to seize Church property").

<sup>90</sup> "Both the open and underground churches receive money not only from Taiwan and Hong Kong, but also from the United States and Europe. Hong Kong and Taiwan provide educational resources - books and video tapes, and teachers for seminaries and pastoral training workshops. Besides providing formal teachers, who in the nature of the case must go to institutions controlled by the open church, Hong Kong and Taiwan also send many visitors who informally communicate with the underground church about developments in the universal church." (Richard Madsen, "Catholic Revival during the Reform Era", in Daniel L. Overmyer, *Religion in China Today*, Cambridge (UK), New York and Melbourne, Cambridge University Press, 2003, p. 168).

China to better resist the political pressure of the authorities and more effectively thwart the government's efforts to isolate it from the rest of the Universal Church.

The substantial inefficacy of the government's policy of control is also due to a factor external to the Catholic Church, namely the evolution towards a more open form of society that the PRC has undergone in the last two decades. In order to pursue economic development, the Chinese authorities had to accept an increasing degree of openness in the overall Chinese system. The reason, as pointed out by Chinese scholar Junning Liu, is that "an open society based on a market-liberal order takes on a political dynamic of its own. And a market-liberal order can only be created in an open China."<sup>91</sup> Although the government has tried to limit the process of opening China to only certain well-delimited ambits, for example trade and global 'infotainment',<sup>92</sup> it has been unable to completely prevent such a process from influencing the overall Chinese society. As a result, China today is "a semi-open socialist society with Chinese characteristics",<sup>93</sup> whose door has become (partially) open not only to foreign investments and products but also to influxes of ideas, information and people. The Holy See has been able to take advantage of the openness of China, by thickening the contacts with both segments of the Church in China and fostering the unity of Chinese Catholics. The feedback between the opening of the Middle Kingdom and the increasing cooperation between 'underground' and 'official' Catholics has allowed the Apostolic See to achieve

---

<sup>91</sup> Junning Liu, "The New Trinity: The Political Consequences of the WTO, PNTR and Internet in China". Junning Liu's statement acquires a particular significance if we consider that this author, at the time of publication, was Research Fellow at the Institute of Culture under the Ministry of Culture in Beijing.

<sup>92</sup> In China infotainment plays an important ideological role, being a diversion in which 'soft news' masks the hard realities of political authoritarianism (Daya Kishan Thussu, *News as Entertainment: the Rise of Global Infotainment*, London, Sage Publications, 2007, pp. 1-14).

<sup>93</sup> Junning Liu, "The New Trinity: The Political Consequences of the WTO, PNTR and Internet in China".

important goals like the rapprochement of the large majority of official bishops with Rome and the training of a significant number of Chinese clergy overseas.

### *Conclusion*

In the last decade, the Holy See's augmented communication with, and direction of, the Church in China has progressively caused a change of the PRC government's perception of the conflict of authority with the Holy See. Beijing, besides considering its conflict with Rome as one over leadership and jurisdiction, is now increasingly regarding it as a conflict over sovereignty. From the Chinese point of view, in fact, not only does the Holy See recognize the government of Taiwan, the island that Beijing claims to be inalienable part of its territory, but it also 'interferes with Chinese internal affairs'<sup>94</sup> by demanding to exert authority over the Catholic Church in China, and violates the PRC constitution, which states that "Religious bodies and religious affairs are not subject to any foreign domination."<sup>95</sup> The Chinese authorities' conviction that there is an acute 'conflict of sovereignty' between the PRC and the Holy See greatly contributes to the continuation of the diplomatic impasse between Beijing and Rome. However, this conflict seems to be based more on political and ideological corollaries rather than due to normative and institutional incompatibility. It may therefore be amenable to a political solution: political-ideological stances can be modified and constitutional provisions can be interpreted accordingly. If the Chinese leadership were to become more dialogue-oriented and willing to relax its religious policy, the normalization of Holy See-

---

<sup>94</sup> As previously noted, "Vatican interference with China's internal affairs using the pretext of religious issues" is the formula usually employed by Beijing to refer to the appointment of Chinese bishops by the Holy See.

<sup>95</sup> People's Republic of China, *Constitution of the People's Republic of China*, Article 36.

China relations would become a less arduous process. Of course, the finalization of such a process will still require, besides outstanding diplomatic skills, the concurrence of certain conditions, the making of some mutual concessions and the reaching of an agreement on models of Church-State relations. These conditions, concessions and models will be the object of the next two chapters.

## ***- Chapter VII -***

### ***Working towards Formal Recognition: Aims and Problems***

#### ***Introduction***

While the previous two chapters have analyzed the two main causes of the continuation of the diplomatic stalemate between the Holy See and the PRC, this chapter will investigate the problems that the two parties have to deal with in order to normalize their relations. Firstly, the chapter will present the parties' major objectives in negotiating for the establishment of diplomatic relations. The analysis will then traverse the two main obstacles - the 'interference of the Catholic Church in the internal affairs of China in the name of religion' and the Holy See's recognition of Taiwan - that, according to the Chinese, block the path to formal relations. With regard to the first problem, the chapter will link it with the dispute on the appointment of bishops and maintain that this is the real hurdle on the road to diplomatic normalization. After making a diachronic excursus into the modalities of episcopal selection, the analysis will explore the types of intervention by political authorities into the process. Finally, the chapter will advance an hypothesis on the mutually acceptable procedure for the designation of Catholic bishops in China. The focus will then shift to the Taiwan issue in order to stress its ancillary nature. The chapter, in fact, will argue that the solution to this issue directly depends on solving the question epitomized by the controversy on the episcopal appointments, namely, the granting of actual religious freedom to Chinese Catholics.



### *Aims in Normalizing Relations*

The first step that must be taken in order to understand the state of Holy See-China relations and their potential development is identifying the principal drivers that motivate the Holy See and China to pursue mutual diplomatic recognition. The Apostolic See has essentially two major aims in negotiating for the normalization of its relations with the PRC: actual religious freedom for Chinese Catholics and the evangelization of China, where the first objective serves the second. As stated by a document recently issued by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the Catholic Church claims to have the “inalienable duty and right”<sup>1</sup> to evangelize, in other words, to proselytize.<sup>2</sup> Preaching the Gospel is the spiritual mission that Christ assigned to the apostles: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). At the same time, evangelization is also the instrument through which the Church fulfils its institutional vocation: “including all people in Church membership.”<sup>3</sup> This policy of evangelization has an ‘ideological’ rationale: Catholic Universalism. The Gospel, according to the Church, is a universal message that transcends cultural and political boundaries. As explained by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, “although the Gospel is independent from any culture, it is capable of infusing all cultures, while never allowing itself to be subservient to them.”<sup>4</sup> For this reason - as Cardinal Giovanni

---

<sup>1</sup> Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Doctrinal Note on some Aspects of Evangelization*, 14 December 2007, [http://212.77.1.245/news\\_services/bulletin/news/21315.php?index=21315&lang=it](http://212.77.1.245/news_services/bulletin/news/21315.php?index=21315&lang=it). Accessed 18 January 2007.

<sup>2</sup> “As the Pope repeatedly states, the Church has only one mission, and it has always been this: to proclaim to the world that beauty, happiness, and the response to man’s deepest questions is not an idea, a philosophical system, or a series of teachings, but a person, Jesus Christ, who died and rose for our salvation. It is only by the power and in the light of this mission that the Holy See tries to act on behalf of peace and justice in every corner of the world, using all of the means at its disposal to reach these noble aims.” (Tarcisio Bertone as quoted in Sandro Magister, “Diplomatic Relations with China? Maybe, but on One Condition”).

<sup>3</sup> Eric O. Hanson, *The Catholic Church in World Politics*, p. 124.

<sup>4</sup> Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Doctrinal Note on some Aspects of Evangelization*.

Lajolo, then Secretary for Relations with States, said in October 2005 - “the Catholic Church regards itself as internal to every people and nation, and considers every people and nation as part of itself.”<sup>5</sup> In the light of these two statements, it is possible to understand why the Apostolic exhortation *Ecclesia in Asia* claims that “Jesus is the greatest gift and the treasure the Church has to share with the peoples of Asia.”<sup>6</sup>

It is indisputable that the spreading of the Gospel, in Asia as well in the rest of the world, is greatly facilitated where political authorities guarantee religious freedom and religious pluralism. In other words, although religious freedom is not a precondition for evangelization, it certainly is a factor that highly favours proselytism. It is then understandable why the Church considers religious freedom as an “irrepressible, inalienable and inviolable”<sup>7</sup> human right, “which in some parts of the world, unfortunately, has not yet been recognized and which in others is not respected in practice,”<sup>8</sup> and presses everywhere for it, making clear that evangelization is part of it. An example of the Holy See’s lobbying is the emphasis

---

<sup>5</sup> Giovanni Lajolo as quoted in *Vatican Radio*, “L’arcivescovo Lajolo sulle relazioni diplomatiche tra Santa Sede e Russia e sul ‘piccolo gregge’ cattolico russo”, 26 October 2005, <http://www.radiovaticana.org/orc/Articolo.asp?id=53557>. Accessed 17 May 2007. Monsignor Lajolo added that the universal character of the Catholic Church should be understood “within and in respect of the clear distinction of the roles of religious and political instances in different States.”

<sup>6</sup> Thomas Dabre, “Inter-religious dialogue and evangelization can co-exist”, *Asianews.it*, 12 January 2008, <http://new.asianews.it/index.php?l=en&art=11231&size=>. Accessed 20 January 2008.

Monsignor Dabre is the Bishop of Vasai, member of the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue and chairman of the Doctrinal Commission of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of India. *Ecclesia in Asia* was issued by John Paul II in November 1999. In this document, the Pope affirmed that “the peoples of Asia need Jesus Christ and his Gospel. Asia is thirsting for the living water that Jesus alone can give.” (John Paul II, *Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation ‘Ecclesia in Asia’*, 6 November 1999, [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_exh\\_06111999\\_ecclesia-in-asia\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_06111999_ecclesia-in-asia_en.html). Accessed 16 November 2007).

<sup>7</sup> Benedict XVI as quoted in *Asianews.it*, “Religious freedom is ‘irrepressible, inalienable and inviolable,’ says Pope”, 21 September 2007, <http://www.asianews.it/index.php?l=en&art=10367>. Accessed 24 September 2007.

<sup>8</sup> Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Doctrinal Note on some Aspects of Evangelisation*, 14 December 2007.

on “authentic religious freedom”<sup>9</sup> in Benedict XVI’s letter to Chinese Catholics. There is no doubt that, by advocating religious freedom, the Church upholds a fundamental human right, a right enunciated in important international documents to which the Papal letter expressly refers.<sup>10</sup> But it is also true that a situation of religious freedom in China would enable the Church to more effectively propagate the Catholic faith in the Middle Kingdom and welcome millions of new converts into its bosom. As pointed out by Eric O. Hanson, religious freedom is “the issue that joins ethical behaviour with its [the Church’s] own institutional interests.”<sup>11</sup>

On a more temporal level, for the Catholic Church the PRC is of great strategic and historical importance. “With 1.3 billion people, a dynamically growing economy, increasing influence in Asia, [...] the Communist nation counts among the most important countries in the growth region of Asia as well as the world.”<sup>12</sup> Moreover, it is certain that achieving diplomatic normalization with the PRC would enhance the Apostolic See’s diplomatic position. In fact, the exchange of ambassadors with Beijing would bring the Holy See to a position where it entertains diplomatic relations with all the permanent members of the Security Council of the United Nations.<sup>13</sup>

Given that the PRC authorities still pursue undivided control over the Catholic Church in China (mainly) through the CPCA, *prima facie* it would seem that the

---

<sup>9</sup> “The civil authorities are well aware that the Church in her teaching invites the faithful to be good citizens, respectful and active contributors to the common good in their country, but it is likewise clear that she asks the State to guarantee to those same Catholic citizens the full exercise of their faith, with respect for authentic religious freedom.” (Benedict XVI, *Letter of the Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI to the Bishops, Priests, Consecrated Persons and Lay Faithful of the Catholic Church in the People’s Republic of China*).

<sup>10</sup> See note 43 and note 44 of the Papal letter.

<sup>11</sup> Eric O. Hanson, *The Catholic Church in World Politics*, p. 57.

<sup>12</sup> Hubertus Hoffmann, “The Pope and Beijing”.

<sup>13</sup> PBS - *Religion & Ethics Newsweekly*, “Interview to J. Peter Pham”.

PRC government has no reason to be interested in the normalization of Sino-Pontifical diplomatic relations. Beijing, in fact, is aware that exchanging recognition with the Apostolic See would unavoidably further the consolidation of ties between the Pope and the Catholic Church in China and the latter's entrenchment in Chinese society. However, China has a great incentive to normalize its relations with the Apostolic Palace; namely, to further isolate Taiwan in the international community. Beijing knows that the severing of diplomatic relations between the *Sancta Sedes* and Taipei would constitute a heavy blow to the island's efforts to win international legitimacy. The Holy See, in fact, is the only diplomatic service of note to keep its own representation in Taipei, "where there are no European embassies and where the USA also, friends of Taiwan, keep only commercial offices open."<sup>14</sup> Except for the Apostolic See, Taiwan has diplomatic relations with only twenty-one other countries, all of them being minor states located in Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean region and the Pacific.<sup>15</sup> For this reason, the embassy to the Holy See<sup>16</sup> is the island's only diplomatic mission in Europe. Considering the prestige and the role that the Holy See has in the international arena, it is indisputable that Taiwan's international legitimacy and credibility as a country greatly benefits from Taipei's formal ties with the *Sancta Sedes*.<sup>17</sup> The Holy See, therefore, is probably Taiwan's most important diplomatic

---

<sup>14</sup> Gianni Valente, "Vatican-Manchukuo, mea culpas are not necessary".

<sup>15</sup> The twenty-two countries currently entertaining diplomatic relations with Taiwan are: Tuvalu, Swaziland, Panama, Paraguay, Gambia, Haiti, the Marshall Islands, Kiribati, Saint Kitts and Nevis, São Tomé and Príncipe, El Salvador, Honduras, The Holy See, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Burkina Faso, Saint Lucia, Dominican Republic, Palau, Nauru, Solomon Islands, Belize (*Age*, "Malawi dumps Taiwan for China", 15 January 2008, <http://www.theage.com.au/news/world/malawi-dumps-taiwan-for-china/2008/01/15/1200159447309.html>. Accessed 20 January 2008).

<sup>16</sup> Taiwan's ambassador to the Holy See possesses diplomatic status in Rome through an established concordat between the Holy See and the Italian Government.

<sup>17</sup> Jonathan Cheng, "Change mind-set, Zen urges Beijing", *The Standard*, 31 March 2006, [http://www.thestandard.com.hk/news\\_detail.asp?we\\_cat=4&art\\_id=15541&sid=7302565&con\\_type=1&d\\_str=20060331&fc=8#](http://www.thestandard.com.hk/news_detail.asp?we_cat=4&art_id=15541&sid=7302565&con_type=1&d_str=20060331&fc=8#). Accessed 26 October 2007.

partner.<sup>18</sup> In the last few years, the PRC has been successfully eroding the number of Taipei's allies - especially in Africa and the South Pacific - by luring them with financial incentives that Taiwan can not match.<sup>19</sup> In such a situation, were diplomatic relations between Beijing and the Holy See to be established, not only would Taipei lose its crucial (and only) European ally, but it would also be much easier for Beijing to persuade the other allies of Taiwan, especially the Latin American Catholic states, to shift allegiance to the PRC. The relocation of the nunciature to the Chinese capital, in fact, would almost certainly be interpreted by the diplomatic partners of Taipei as a sign that 'Taiwan has lost the battle'.<sup>20</sup> At that stage, China would offer them more international aid and investments in order to provoke a 'recognition shifting' domino effect. Taiwan, then, being deprived of international recognition, would become much more amenable to reunification with the mainland.<sup>21</sup>

Apart from the diplomatic isolation of Taipei, a second major motivation that China has for normalizing its relations with the Holy See is the fulfilment of its ambitions as a major power in a future multipolar international system. As respected international relations scholars maintain, a new multipolar reality is

---

<sup>18</sup> Dr Tou Chou-seng, Taiwan's Ambassador to the Holy See, highlighted the importance of maintaining diplomatic relations with of the Holy See. The diplomat declared: "The Holy See is the only European nation with which we still have relations. [...] We're encountering huge difficulties in the international community, and the Vatican is very important to us." If the Vatican were to shift recognition to Beijing, Tou said, "We would feel like we've lost our friends." (Tou Chou-seng as quoted in John Allen, "China, Taiwan and the Vatican").

<sup>19</sup> I-Chung Lai, "Taiwan Examines Its Policies of Diplomacy", *China Brief*, Vol. VI, Issue 20, 4 October 2006, p. 8. See also *Africa Research Bulletin*, "Malawi-China-Taiwan: Aid Promises", Vol. 44, No. 12, February 2008, p. 176.

<sup>20</sup> Indeed, "such a move would undoubtedly strike a massive blow to Taiwan's efforts to win international legitimacy." (Jonathan Cheng, "Change mind-set, Zen urges Beijing").

<sup>21</sup> As previously noted, Beijing's government considers Taiwan a renegade province which is, nonetheless, "an inseparable part of China" (Liu Jianchao as quoted in *AFP*, "China dismisses US bill backing UN membership for Taiwan", 13 November 2007, [http://afp.google.com/article/ALeqM5iX9Sfsy2sJ\\_iRqWLTvc6Iqw5eXEA](http://afp.google.com/article/ALeqM5iX9Sfsy2sJ_iRqWLTvc6Iqw5eXEA). Accessed 7 January 2008).

taking shape, especially in Asia.<sup>22</sup> In their view, because the rise of India and China as relevant actors in the world economy and global governance “is leading to the formation of a *de facto* multipolar power constellation, [...] the current global governance architecture, with its quasi-unilateralist (i.e. American) bias, is [...] unlikely to last more than a brief historical moment.”<sup>23</sup> Chinese leaders, believing Beijing’s interests “have not been sufficiently respected in the existing international order dominated by the United States and the Western Powers,”<sup>24</sup> aim to consolidate the rise of their country to a major power status in the coming multipolar world. China’s multipolar ambitions represent “a challenge to American leadership - particularly in the Asia-Pacific Region - as well as opposition to several specific U.S. policies or objectives.”<sup>25</sup> Therefore, the United States is implementing some specific policies in order to hinder the PRC’s ascension to great power status and delay the transformation of the present international system into a multipolar one. The policies that Washington is enacting in the Asia-Pacific to this aim include strong bilateral security alliances in the region, plans to develop a system to defend against ballistic missiles, and criticism of China’s bad human rights record.<sup>26</sup> In the last decade, complaints about inadequate protection of human rights and religious freedom have been brought up by the State Department as well as private American organizations and individuals to embarrass Beijing and to prove that China cannot be a responsible stakeholder of the international

---

<sup>22</sup> Federico Bordonaro, “Asia’s Dawning Multipolar System Increases Australia’s Geopolitical Importance”, *Power and Interest News Report*, 14 June 2006, [http://pinr.com/report.php?ac=view\\_report&report\\_id=509&language\\_id=1](http://pinr.com/report.php?ac=view_report&report_id=509&language_id=1). Accessed 1 November 2007.

<sup>23</sup> John Humphrey and Dirk Messner, “Unstable Multipolarity? China’s and India’s Challenges for Global Governance”, *German Development Institute*, January 2006, p.1.

<sup>24</sup> Suisheng Zhao, *Chinese Foreign Policy: Pragmatism and Strategic Behavior*, New York, M.E. Sharpe, 2004, p. 186.

<sup>25</sup> Denny Roy, “China’s Pitch for a Multipolar World: The New Security Concept”, *Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 1, May 2003, p. 1.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 1-2.

community.<sup>27</sup> Given that the Holy See is one of the most active champions of human rights and religious freedom on the world stage, a warmer relationship between Beijing and Peter's See "would lessen Western accusations of human rights, when the Holy See is the role model of morality."<sup>28</sup> In other words, by normalizing its relations with the Apostolic See, "a moral superpower in international affairs,"<sup>29</sup> the PRC would start breaking its "moral isolation."<sup>30</sup> As a result, China would become less vulnerable to American criticism and gain "a more favourable disposition from Catholics generally and more specifically their influence in the European Union."<sup>31</sup> This would significantly contribute to legitimating its status as a great power and reliable stakeholder in the Asian and global system.<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup> The concept of China as a 'responsible stakeholder' of the international community was introduced in 2005 by the then American Deputy Secretary of State, Robert B. Zoellick. (U.S. Department of State, "Deputy Secretary Zoellick Statement on Conclusion of the Second U.S.-China Senior Dialogue", 8 December 2005, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2005/57822.htm>. Accessed 18 November 2007).

<sup>28</sup> Beatrice Leung, "Sino-Vatican Relations at the Century's Turn", p. 358.

<sup>29</sup> Thomas J. Reese, *Inside the Vatican: The Politics and Organization of the Catholic Church*, Cambridge (Massachusetts), Harvard University Press, 1998, p. 272.

<sup>30</sup> Federico Punzi, "Olimpiadi, la Cina è nervosa", *Opinione*, 11 April 2008, [http://www.opinione.it/pages.php?dir=naz&act=art&edi=71&id\\_art=2926&aa=2008](http://www.opinione.it/pages.php?dir=naz&act=art&edi=71&id_art=2926&aa=2008). Accessed 11 April 2008.

<sup>31</sup> Beatrice Leung, "Sino-Vatican Relations at the Century's Turn", p. 358. According to John Humphrey and Dirk Messner, the European Union - together with the United States, China and India - will be one of the significant poles of power in the future architecture of global governance. (John Humphrey and Dirk Messner, "Unstable Multipolarity? China's and India's Challenges for Global Governance", *German Development Institute*, January 2006, p. 2).

<sup>32</sup> Catholic institutional actors are aware that Chinese leaders are deeply concerned about the damages that American criticism can do to the PRC's international image. Therefore, they often put the emphasis on this issue in order to prompt Beijing to normalize its relations with Rome. For instance, in 2000 Peter Signorelli, a member of Opus Dei (a personal prelature of the Catholic Church) addressed a open-letter to Jiang Zemin to remind him about the pernicious effects of American criticism and advise him to seek dialogue with the Holy See. Signorelli wrote: "You, of course, are aware, Mr. President, of the campaign that recently was waged to link charges of religious persecution in China to resistance of U.S. approval of MFN status for China, as well as opposition to your country's entry into the WTO." (Peter Signorelli, "Toward a Beijing-Vatican Rapprochement", *Wanniski*, 28 December 2000, <http://www.wanniski.com/showarticle.asp?articleid=4277>. Accessed 30 December 2007). More recently, Professor Agostino Giovagnoli, an expert in Holy See-China relations at Milan's Catholic University, stated that: "The Chinese government knows that the Vatican is not a power in the political, military sense, but in the moral sense the Pope is very important." (Agostino Giovagnoli as quoted in Sabina Castelfranco, "Vatican, China Seek Closer Diplomatic Ties", *Voice of America*, 22 January 2008, <http://www.voanews.com/english/archive/2008-01/2008-01-22-voa34.cfm?CFID=277811054&CFTOKEN=46626151>. Accessed 26 January 2008).

Beijing has also a third motivation to formalize its relations with the Holy See. The Chinese government, in fact, is aware that the establishment of diplomatic ties with the Apostolic See would considerably further the development of the network of Catholic social services in the PRC. The expansion and capillarization of the Catholic welfare sector could play an important role in easing the social tension caused by the increasing gap between the rich and poor, as well as between the country and urban areas. The Party-State leaders are acutely aware that social unrest caused by economic disparities and neglect of the weakest groups of the population might be, in the long run, a time bomb in today's transitional Chinese society. Presently in China, as admitted by social service officials, "23 million out of 1.32 billion people live in absolute poverty, unable to afford the most basic goods and services."<sup>33</sup> Especially in the rural areas, the corruption of many grassroots officials - with its corollaries of extortion, illegal taxation and misappropriation of land - is progressively aggravating the peasantry's destitution.<sup>34</sup> The situation is so grim that often the people do not expect any sort of state welfare any more. As declared by disability rights advocate Chen Guangcheng: "hardly anybody gets that [state welfare] in the countryside."<sup>35</sup> Chinese rulers know only too well that most of the revolutions in the Middle Kingdom have started as *jacqueries*. For this reason, instability in the Chinese countryside is now of utmost concern, having "the government itself acknowledged that over eighty-thousand incidents of civil unrest have taken place over 2005."<sup>36</sup> The government has tried to remedy the situation by inaugurating a new policy,

---

<sup>33</sup> Robert Frazee, "From special ed to finding water, Chinese church offers social help", *Catholic News Service*, 7 April 2005, <http://www.catholicnews.com/data/stories/cns/print/0701901.htm>. Accessed 25 October 2007.

<sup>34</sup> Rupert Wingfield-Hayes, "China's rural millions left behind", *BBC*, 7 March 2006, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/4782194.stm>. Accessed 10 October 2007.

<sup>35</sup> Chen Guangcheng as quoted in Stephen Hallett, "One eye on China: Mind the Gap", *BBC*, 23 March 2006, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/ouch/closeup/china/230306.shtml>. Accessed 12 July 2007.

<sup>36</sup> Stephen Hallett, "One eye on China: Mind the Gap".



named 'Building a New Socialist Countryside',<sup>37</sup> in order to deliver welfare services to the rural areas.<sup>38</sup>

Unfortunately, the new social policy seems to be producing few results, mainly because of local officials' reluctant cooperation, also known as the 'policies above and counter-policies below' syndrome.<sup>39</sup> Given that the state's devices aimed at curing the country's social diseases seem to be failing, allowing non-state welfare agencies to address social problems is in the interest of the government which, in fact, has started to recognize that religious communities have a role to play in welfare activities.<sup>40</sup> The Church has centuries-old experience in welfare, and a Catholic social service network is - sometimes under cover - already active in the PRC. According to Sinologist Beatrice Leung, who is usually well-informed about the situation of the Church in China, "Catholic funded social service projects go as far as Tibet."<sup>41</sup> As early as 1994, Leung was told by the Catholic social agency, Caritas-Hong Kong, responsible for projects in China, that it has been their policy to give first priority to those projects in the poorest and most remote areas.<sup>42</sup> Catholic social development programs are usually funded by overseas-based Catholic organizations<sup>43</sup> and range from "scholarship, school construction, health

---

<sup>37</sup> *China Internet Information Center*, "Building a New Socialist Countryside", <http://www.china.org.cn/english/zhuanti/country/159776.htm>. Accessed 7 January 2008.

<sup>38</sup> The central government promised to scrap all agricultural taxes, including the arbitrary fees forced on farmers by village officials. In addition, more resources will be allocated for poor regions, and free education and healthcare will be guaranteed for the most vulnerable (Stephen Hallett, "One eye on China: Mind the Gap").

<sup>39</sup> A Chinese proverb says, "The Emperor imposes policies, and counter-policies are implemented locally." (*Mallesons Stephen Jaques*, "A lesson in Chinese proverbs - some myths exposed", 11 May 2007, p. 7).

<sup>40</sup> Robert Frazee, "From special ed to finding water, Chinese church offers social help".

<sup>41</sup> Beatrice Leung, "Sino-Vatican Relations at the Century's Turn", p. 368.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibidem*

<sup>43</sup> For instance, the Xi'an diocesan social service center has fourteen staffers and gets support from Misereor, a German Catholic aid agency, and Catholic Relief Services, the US bishops' international relief and development agency. The diocese runs its programs on a yearly budget of 517,000 American dollars (Robert Frazee, "From special ed to finding water, Chinese church offers social help").

care projects, elderly services” to “well digging projects, cultivation and life improvement projects in rural China.”<sup>44</sup> The social service network of the Catholic Church is global and structured according to the principles of transnationalism and glocalization, but - because it is directed from the Vatican - its efficiency at national level can be limited by the lack of formal relations between the Holy See and a state’s government. Therefore, the normalization of Sino-Pontifical relations between China and the Holy See would certainly facilitate and augment the involvement of overseas Catholic funding agencies in China. The significant advantages in terms of social stability that would arise from such enhanced involvement are clearly evident to the Chinese government.<sup>45</sup>

*Problems on the Road to Normalization of Relations: the ‘Non Interference in  
China’s Internal Affairs’*

While both parties have strong motivations for pursuing mutual recognition, they also have differences that hinder them from the establishment of diplomatic relations. As previously explained, the greatest impediment to the normalization of relations is the Chinese demand of the Holy See ‘not to interfere in China’s internal affairs in the name of religion’. As illustrated beforehand, this formula mainly means that, according to Beijing, the Holy See should accept governmental control over the Church in China, in particular, over the selection of Chinese clergy - especially bishops.

---

<sup>44</sup> A report submitted at the aforementioned consultation conference of Propaganda Fide held in Ariccia, Italy, from 28 February to 2 March 2002, as quoted in Beatrice Leung, “Sino-Vatican Relations at the Century’s Turn”, p. 362.

<sup>45</sup> Beatrice Leung, “Sino-Vatican Relations at the Century’s Turn”, pp. 368-369.

As Richard Madsen notes: “the big issue for normalizing relations between the Vatican and the Chinese Government has to do with who gets control of the appointment of bishops.”<sup>46</sup> Indeed, from the time of Constantine, control of the appointment of bishops has been the most crucial aspect of the confrontation between political and religious authorities. The battles over ecclesiastical appointments (and the penetration of missionary personnel and foreign ecclesiastical finances) still remain important in both authoritarian and totalitarian political systems. Unlike undemocratic states, liberal democracies restrict religion to the private sphere and do not seek to control the Church institutions through episcopal appointments. In liberal democratic countries, Church-state antagonism revolves around the Church’s “attempt to apply Catholic ethics to political and social issues such as family policy, welfare and abortion.”<sup>47</sup> On the contrary, control over episcopal selection remains the single most important political issue in authoritarian states of both the left and the right, regardless of whether the state is Catholic like Franco’s Spain, or Socialist, like the PRC.

The Nicene Creed, the fundamental Credo of the Catholic faith, reads: “We believe in One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.”<sup>48</sup> For Catholics, Jesus is only truly preached and proclaimed within the borders of the Universal Church. As Saint Ignatius of Antioch wrote in II century, “wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the

---

<sup>46</sup> Richard Madsen, “The Chinese Catholic Church as Part of Civil Society”.

<sup>47</sup> Eric O. Hanson, *The Catholic Church in World Politics*, p. 38.

<sup>48</sup> Holy See, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, [http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc\\_css/archive/catechism/credo.htm](http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/credo.htm). Accessed 30 December 2007. The Nicene Creed is an ecumenical Christian statement of faith accepted in the Catholic Church, the Eastern Orthodox Church, Oriental Orthodoxy, the Assyrian, the Anglican Communion, Lutheranism, the Reformed churches, Methodism, and many other forms of Protestantism. As all Catholics profess that their Church was founded by Jesus Christ on the apostle Peter, bishops not in union with the successor to Peter are illicit pastors of the Catholic Church.

Catholic Church.”<sup>49</sup> This implies that the Pope and Catholic bishops perceive their loyalty to the (pneumatic and) institutional unity of the Church as an integral part of their religious faith.<sup>50</sup> Borrowing the words of Hanson: “Just as they take their faith seriously, they take their institution seriously.”<sup>51</sup> In terms of political analysis, this means that the Catholic Church’s point of strength is its union of organization and ideology. The Catholic Church can be truly Catholic as long as its members publicly profess ecclesiastical unity and loyalty to the institution and its leaders uphold and protect its doctrinal and institutional integrity. Consequently, when certain circumstances impel the Pope or bishops to choose between what they regard as the doctrinal and institutional unity of their religious organization and external political or societal goals, a strong expectation exists that they will decide for the former. In other words, they are supposed to give priority to the institutional survival of the Church, rather than to its institutional interest.

The CPCA’s policy of ‘democratic’ election of bishops, by repudiating the pneumo-institutional authority of the Apostolic See over the Church in China,<sup>52</sup> denies the “unrenounceable principles of faith and of ecclesiastical communion”<sup>53</sup> and gravely undermines the organizational integrity of the Universal Church. The Pope, therefore, “would be remiss in his duties as shepherd of the worldwide

---

<sup>49</sup> Ignatius of Antioch, *Epistle to the Smyrnaeans*, 110,

<http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/srawley/smyrnaeans.html>. Accessed 13 January 2008.

<sup>50</sup> “The unity with the Pope symbolizes the unity with the Universal Catholic Church, an essential tenet of Catholic doctrine.” (Gianni Criveller, “The smoke screen of China’s preconditions for relations with the Holy See”, *Asianews.it*, 21 April 2005, <http://www.asianews.it/index.php?l=en&art=3108>. Accessed 26 January 2007).

<sup>51</sup> Eric O. Hanson, *The Catholic Church in World Politics*, p. 43.

<sup>52</sup> “In the rite of ordination, the Apostolic Pontifical mandate still appeared to be replaced by the consent of the state-sanctioned Chinese Bishops’ College.” (Gianni Valente, “The long road and ‘accidents along the way’”).

<sup>53</sup> Benedict XVI, *Letter of the Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI to the Bishops, Priests, Consecrated Persons and Lay Faithful of the Catholic Church in the People’s Republic of China*.

Catholic flock”<sup>54</sup> if he did not reaffirm that bishops must be ordained with the approval of the Holy See and that bishops not in union with the successor of Peter are illicit pastors of the Catholic Church. Although compromise is not an unknown tool in the Pontifical diplomatic armoury, the Holy See - because of its religious nature and the doctrinal tenets it must uphold - cannot renounce the prerogative of episcopal appointments. From the Apostolic Palace’s point of view, in fact, what is at stake is not the organizational structure of the Church in one country but the spiritual unity of the whole Catholic Church. As previously noted, the Church believes that “the political community and the Church are autonomous and independent of each other in their own fields.”<sup>55</sup> Therefore, in the Holy See’s perspective, asserting that the CPCA cannot claim the right to appoint bishops for itself is not ‘meddling’ in China’s internal affairs. The Pontifical stance can be illustrated by this declaration of Cardinal Tauran: “I do not see how a relationship that is religious in nature such as that which exists among Catholics and the Pope could constitute interference in the internal affairs of a country or bring into question the sovereignty and independence of the state.”<sup>56</sup> The Cardinal reaffirmed the Holy See’s position: there is no conflict in being a Catholic in communion with the Pope and the teachings of the *Magisterium*<sup>57</sup> on the one hand and being a loyal Chinese citizen on the other.

---

<sup>54</sup> Peter Signorelli, “Toward a Beijing-Vatican Rapprochement”.

<sup>55</sup> Benedict XVI, *Letter of the Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI to the Bishops, Priests, Consecrated Persons and Lay Faithful of the Catholic Church in the People’s Republic of China*.

<sup>56</sup> Jean-Louis Tauran as quoted in *Catholic World News*, “Tensions Within Vatican on China Diplomacy”, 23 March 1999, <http://www.cwnews.com/news/viewstory.cfm?recnum=9898>. Accessed 15 January 2008.

<sup>57</sup> “By the Magisterium we mean the teaching office of the Church. It consists of the Pope and Bishops. Christ promised to protect the teaching of the Church : ‘He who hears you, hears me; he who rejects you rejects me, he who rejects me, rejects Him who sent me’ (Luke 10. 16). Now of course the promise of Christ cannot fail: hence when the Church presents some doctrine as definitive or final, it comes under this protection, it cannot be in error; in other words, it is infallible.” (William G. Most, “The Magisterium or Teaching Authority of the Church”, *EWTN*, March 2005, <http://www.ewtn.com/faith/Teachings/chura4.htm>. Accessed 17 January 2008).

As formerly explained, the stance of the Chinese government on the episcopal appointments dramatically contrasts with that of the Apostolic Palace. In fact, for the Chinese authorities, Rome's request to nominate bishops in the Middle Kingdom is "groundless"<sup>58</sup> because it is a demand that impinges upon China's sovereignty. In the opinion of the Party's leadership, the Church in China should be Chinese in the first instance and then Catholic. *Ca va sans dire* that, from Beijing's point of view, the Chinese Church has the duty to uphold the interests of the homeland and obey the national government. Therefore, in the eyes of the Chinese Communists, allowing the Holy See to select the Chinese bishops would substantially contravene the constitutional norm stating that "Religious bodies and religious affairs are not subject to any foreign domination."<sup>59</sup> *Ergo*, in the view of the PRC authorities the controversy on the right to nominate bishop is a matter of national sovereignty. For this reason, the Holy See's acceptance of "the will of the Chinese Church" would be regarded in Beijing as a sign of respect for China's sovereignty and thus "create a good atmosphere for the improvement of Sino-Vatican ties."<sup>60</sup>

It appears that the two parties are facing a quandary. The Holy See asks Beijing to accept the principle of hierarchical communion, or Papal authority, while the Chinese government demand the Apostolic See respect the 'independence' of the 'official' Church. None of the parties can yield without reneging its ideological tenets and - from its perspective - undermining its institutional integrity. Consequently, it seems that the conflicts of goals and interests between the two

---

<sup>58</sup> Foreign Ministry of the People's Republic of China as quoted in Alexa Olesen, "China's Church Defies Vatican Objections".

<sup>59</sup> People's Republic of China, *Constitution of the People's Republic of China*, Article 36.

<sup>60</sup> Foreign Ministry of the People's Republic of China as quoted in Alexa Olesen, "China's Church Defies Vatican Objections".

parties are bound to indefinitely prolong the standoff situation in Sino-Pontifical relations. However, finding a solution to the question of episcopal appointments in China is, in theory, not impossible. Actually, both the diachronic scrutiny of the modalities of episcopal selection and the analysis of the current system reveal that the Church can, to a certain extent, be flexible on the procedure for choosing its pastors.

Throughout most of Church history power over the appointment of bishops shifted between laity, diocesan clergy and secular rulers (often with the Pope in a confirmatory role), and the Papacy.<sup>61</sup> During the first centuries of Christianity, the laity used to choose their own shepherds. With the gradual increasing in number and importance of the clergy and the emergence of a structured ecclesiastical hierarchy, the nomination process came under the control of the local clerics and the provincial bishops. More and more frequently, it was the clergy that proposed one of them as a candidate, while the role of the faithful was to approve or reject that nominee by acclamation.<sup>62</sup> The endorsed candidate would then be consecrated by the bishops of the province. "After his consecration, the new bishop would simply notify the Pope as bishop of Rome."<sup>63</sup> During the Middle Ages, bishops were chosen essentially in three ways. Namely, by royal nomination, by capitular election,<sup>64</sup> and by Papal provision.<sup>65</sup> In 1563 the Council of Trento confirmed the

---

<sup>61</sup> Stephen Haliczzer, "Papal Control Over the Appointment of Bishops", *Catholic Observer*, 15 May 2006, <http://catholicobserver.com/2006/05/15/papal-control-over-the-appointment-of-bishops.aspx>. Accessed 14 January 2008. This assertion about the confirmatory role of the Pope is rather simplistic. I reported it only for the sake of expository clarity.

<sup>62</sup> However, the laity's role progressively became purely acclamatory (John E. Lynch, "Appointments of Bishops, History" in Philippe Levillain, *The Papacy: An Encyclopedia*, New York, Routledge, 2001, Vol. 1, p. 91).

<sup>63</sup> Ibidem

<sup>64</sup> An ecclesiastic chapter, in Latin *capitulum*, is an assembly of the canons of a church or of the members of a religious residence.

<sup>65</sup> John E. Lynch, "Appointments of Bishops, History" in Philippe Levillain, *The Papacy: An Encyclopedia*, p. 93.

three above-mentioned procedures but, with the aim of giving the Papacy a role in the confirmation of episcopal elections, affirmed that it was the Pope who judged whether the nominees were shown to be suitable by nomination and enquiry. However, “while the direct nomination of bishops by the Pope may have been the theory, that prerogative was [in many cases] relinquished over the next three or four hundred years.”<sup>66</sup>

Over the XIX century, as the Church tried to reclaim a stronger role in the selection of bishops, a number of ways to accommodate state interest and Papal involvement in the process evolved.<sup>67</sup> At the beginning of the XX century the Holy See recognized through concordats or other arrangement some role in the selection of bishops for the governments of Austria, France, Germany, Monaco, Portugal, Spain, Colombia, Bolivia, and Ecuador.<sup>68</sup> With the turn of the century the Apostolic See strove to reassert its prerogative of episcopal election vis-à-vis the civil authorities. The 1917 Code of Canon Law declared the right of the Roman Pontiff to freely nominate bishops and to establish the criteria for their suitability. For the first time in Church history, “a canonical text of universal import”<sup>69</sup> sanctioned the Papal prerogative.<sup>70</sup> In 1965, the Second Vatican Council’s decree *Christus Dominus*, stated that the right of appointing bishops belongs “exclusively to the competent

---

<sup>66</sup> Ibidem. From the XV century, the strong monarchies of the emerging modern European states sought to exercise control over the Church to the aim of consolidating their power. Progressively, the appointment of bishops became a matter of royal patronage in the Catholic countries of France, Spain, Portugal, Bavaria, Saxony and Austria. This right extended to the possessions of Spain and Portugal in the New World and in the East Indies.

<sup>67</sup> Through concordats civil authorities did enjoy the privilege of designation, and - at the dawn of XX century - about twenty cathedral chapters in Western European dioceses had maintained the long tradition of election (ibidem, p. 94).

<sup>68</sup> Ibidem

<sup>69</sup> Ibidem

<sup>70</sup> Anyway, this Code - in canon 3 - acknowledged that its provisions did not affect any concordat then in existence. Furthermore, while affirming the exclusive competency of the Pope, the Code recognized that he could concede to others the privilege of electing, presenting, or designating candidates for the episcopacy.



ecclesiastic authority.”<sup>71</sup> The Council, being highly concerned that in the future no rights or privileges be accorded to civil power, was also committed to have any existing rights abrogated. For this reason, the *Christus Dominus* “most kindly” invited the states “voluntarily to renounce the above-mentioned rights and privileges which they presently enjoy by reason of a treaty or custom, after discussing the matter with the Apostolic See.”<sup>72</sup> The 1983 Code of Canon Law closed the circle in respect to episcopal appointments by declaring, in canon 377, that “the Supreme Pontiff freely appoints bishops and confirms those legitimately elected.”<sup>73</sup> In the same canon, the Code added that “in the future, no rights and privileges of election, nomination, presentation, or designation of bishops are granted to civil authorities.”<sup>74</sup>

Today, the Latin Church<sup>75</sup> follows a general procedure for the selection and appointment of bishops. At least every three years, the bishops of the dioceses of the same ecclesiastic province (excluding any other cleric of non-episcopal rank) draw up a list of clerics who, in their judgment, qualify from promotion to the episcopate. When a new bishop is needed, the merits of the candidates mentioned

---

<sup>71</sup> Article 20 of *Christus Dominus* reads: “Since the apostolic office of bishops was instituted by Christ the Lord and pursues a spiritual and supernatural purpose, this sacred ecumenical synod declares that the right of nominating and appointing bishops belongs properly, peculiarly, and per se exclusively to the competent ecclesiastical authority. Therefore, for the purpose of duly protecting the freedom of the Church and of promoting more conveniently and efficiently the welfare of the faithful, this holy council desires that in future no more rights or privileges of election, nomination, presentation, or designation for the office of bishop be granted to civil authorities.” (Second Vatican Council, *Decree Concerning the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church ‘Christus Dominus’*, 28 October 1965,

[http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vatii\\_decree\\_19651028\\_christus-dominus\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vatii_decree_19651028_christus-dominus_en.html). Accessed 17 January 2008).

<sup>72</sup> Ibidem

<sup>73</sup> Holy See, *Code of Canon Law*, Can. 377.

<sup>74</sup> Ibidem

<sup>75</sup> “The Latin Church is simply that vast portion of the Catholic body which obeys the Latin patriarch, which submits to the Pope, not only in Papal, but also in patriarchal matters. It is thus distinguished from the Eastern Churches (whether Catholic or Schismatic), which represent the other four patriarchates (Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem), and any fractions broken away from them. The Latin patriarchate has always been considerably the largest.” (Adrian Fortescue, “Latin Church”, in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 9, New York, Robert Appleton Company, 1910, <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09022a.htm>. Accessed 20 January 2008).

in these lists are discussed by the assembly of the bishops of the province who subsequently vote in secret ballot. The results are communicated to the Papal representative (the Nuncio or Apostolic Delegate) to the country by the metropolitan bishop. After carrying out “a wide-ranging and thorough search,”<sup>76</sup> as well as consultations regarding the candidates, the Papal representative then produces a list of three names called *terna* showing, in order of preference, the names of the priests to be promoted or bishops to be transferred whom in conscience he considers most suitable.

The Papal representative’s report is then received in Rome by the competent dicastery<sup>77</sup> which examines the report and forwards it for further examination to the bimonthly assembly of Cardinals and bishops who belong to the dicastery. The result of this scrutiny is then brought to the Pope by the Cardinal prefect of the Congregation.<sup>78</sup> In general the Pope ratifies the decision, but he might just as well decide against it. Once the nomination is ratified, the nominee is officially (and confidentially) informed by the Papal representative to his country and is given a brief period of time to accept the nomination.

As previously noted, the general Law of the Latin Church is derogated in states where the ecclesial life suffers grave limitations. In these countries the bishops are

---

<sup>76</sup> Joel Benoit D’Onorio, “Appointment of Bishops”, in Philippe Levillain, *The Papacy: an Encyclopedia*, New York, Routledge, 2001, Vol. 1, pp. 85-90, p. 86.

<sup>77</sup> “The competent dicastery is the Congregation for bishops in the majority of cases, or the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples for the so called mission countries, or the Congregation for the Oriental Church for those territories that are Eastern but are not patriarchal or extra-patriarchal, and where the nomination of bishops depends on the Roman Pontiff” (Joel Benoit D’Onorio, “Appointment of Bishops”, in Philippe Levillain, *The Papacy: An Encyclopedia* p. 86).

<sup>78</sup> Being China one of the mission countries, the competent dicastery for the selection of the candidates to Chinese bishoprics is the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, currently headed by Indian Cardinal Ivan Dias. The Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples is also informally known as the ‘Red Pope’: red, because he is a (purple-clad) Cardinal; Pope, because “he has almost absolute power over mission territories for Catholicism, essentially the Churches of Africa and Asia.” (Sandro Magister, “Vatican Rumors: The Rise of the Red Pope”).

authorized by the Holy See “to choose and consecrate trustworthy clergy on their own initiative, provided Rome was informed as soon as possible.”<sup>79</sup> This happened, for example, in the Socialist countries of Eastern Europe and, until 2007, also in China.<sup>80</sup> Further exceptions to normal procedure arise from ecclesiastical traditions<sup>81</sup> or diplomatic conventions set by international law on treaties. In the first case the Pope, in force of his right of *affectio papalis*,<sup>82</sup> can derogate to them and impose a candidate of his own. In the second case, the Holy See is bound to accept the intervention of civil authorities in the process of episcopal appointments by the diplomatic conventions.

There are different types of intervention of political authorities. The first, and most simple, is the communication that the Apostolic See, as a sign of courtesy and according to the custom, sends through its local representative to certain governments to let them know in advance the names of new bishops. In other cases, on the basis of bilateral conventions, the Holy See has granted to some governments the benefit of a right of preliminary consultation in the case of appointment of bishops.<sup>83</sup> In essence, the Holy See asks the civil authorities if they

---

<sup>79</sup> Joel Benoit D’Onorio, “Appointment of Bishops”, in Philippe Levillain, *The Papacy: An Encyclopedia*, p. 86.

<sup>80</sup> As noted in Chapter IV, at the end of his June 2007 letter to Chinese Catholics, the Pope announced the revocation of the special faculties granted to Chinese bishops loyal to Rome during “truly difficult times.” (Benedict XVI, *Letter of the Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI to the Bishops, Priests, Consecrated Persons and Lay Faithful of the Catholic Church in the People’s Republic of China*).

<sup>81</sup> Ecclesiastical traditions concern episcopal sees provided for through elections. These are to be found in Western Europe. (Joel Benoit D’Onorio, “Appointment of Bishops”, in Philippe Levillain, *The Papacy: An Encyclopedia*, p. 86).

<sup>82</sup> The *affectio papalis* is a right peculiar to the successor to Peter that consists of his power to take place of any authority instituted within the Church on canonical or liturgical matters (Joel Benoit D’Onorio, “Appointment of Bishops”, in Philippe Levillain, *The Papacy: An Encyclopedia*, p. 88). On the same matter, see also Georg Gänswein, “Affectio Papalis”, in Axel von Campenhausen, *Lexikon für Kirchen- und Staatskirchenrecht: Lexikon für Kirchen- und Staatskirchenrecht*, Vol. 1, Paderborn, Schöningh, 2002, pp. 36-37).

<sup>83</sup> However, for two states, Italy and Peru, this pre-communication is provided for by a diplomatic convention (*Ibidem*).

“have an objection of a general political nature to the nominee.”<sup>84</sup> This is, for example, the case of France.<sup>85</sup> A substantially more stringent form of state intervention in appointments is the right of presentation whereby the civil authorities choose the candidates and present them to the Holy See. Today the right of presentation is in force in two countries only - Spain and France - and in regards to only three bishoprics. While in the case of France the presentation is actually a heteroclite form of consultation, the procedure of the presentation by Spain is of particular interest. The King of Spain presents to the Pope the new Military Ordinary<sup>86</sup> chosen from a *terna* drawn up by mutual agreement between the nunciature and the Spanish minister for foreign affairs and previously approved by the Holy See.

### *The Appointment of Bishops: Potential Solutions*

The potential solutions to the issue of the selection of Chinese bishops should be identified and evaluated in the light of the three factors illustrated in the previous paragraph: the centripetal historical evolution of the selection process of bishops; the existing forms of intervention of political authorities; and the exceptional character of these forms of intervention.

---

<sup>84</sup> At issue here are not the political opinions of the persons concerned but the attitudes they might adopt in questions of public and constitutional order, state security, or regional separatism. (Ibidem).

<sup>85</sup> Besides France, countries under this category include Tunisia, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Argentina, Columbia, Ecuador and Venezuela, Austria, Germany, Italy, Poland, Portugal and Spain. (Jean-Louis Harouel, “The Methods of Selecting Bishops Stipulated by Church-State Agreements in Force Today” in Peter Huizing and Knut Walf, *Electing Our Own Bishops*, New York, Seabury Press, 1980, p. 64).

<sup>86</sup> The Military Ordinary is the bishop of the armed forces.

A solution based on the 'right of presentation or designation' is probably the most unrealistic one. Given that - as previously noted - the Code of Canon Law clearly states that "in the future, no rights and privileges of election, nomination, presentation, or designation of bishops are granted to civil authorities,"<sup>87</sup> a scenario contemplating Beijing's government - if not the CPCA - providing a list of candidates to the Vatican, and then taking a decision based in part on the Holy See's opinions<sup>88</sup> is very unlikely to eventuate. In fact, this type of solution, though greatly appealing to the Chinese, is - in all probability - impracticable, given that the Apostolic Palace would utterly reject it as a violation of the Pope's prerogatives, a wound to the unity of the Universal Church, and a negation of the *libertas Ecclesiae* principle. Borrowing Cardinal Lajolo's words again, the final say (at least at a formal level) on the appointment of its shepherds is something that the Catholic Church "can never give up if it is to remain faithful to itself."<sup>89</sup> From a less theoretical point of view, it is plain that the Church, after centuries of patient diplomacy aimed at consolidating Papal power over the selection and nomination of bishops, is extremely reluctant to create a precedent that could gravely undermine the authority of the See of Peter.

For a contrary and equal reason, there is only a very slim chance that a solution modelled after the Apostolic See's prior communication of the names of new bishops would meet Beijing's approval, let alone that of the CPCA which would immediately raise the alarm about the Holy See nominating candidates "who are opposed to the Communist Party."<sup>90</sup> Such an option would almost certainly be

---

<sup>87</sup> Holy See, *Code of Canon Law*, Can. 377.

<sup>88</sup> Magda Hornemann, "China's Catholics, the Holy See and religious freedom".

<sup>89</sup> Giovanni Lajolo as quoted in Chang Yun-ping, "Top envoy says Vatican ready to relocate embassy".

<sup>90</sup> Anthony Liu Bainian as quoted in Wu Jiao, "Patriotism and religion can go hand in hand".

regarded by the Chinese as little more than a pageant sanctioning the *fait accompli* of a choice already made. The PRC government would plausibly see itself as excluded from the episcopal selection process and relegated to a merely confirmatory role. In the eyes of the Chinese leadership, accepting the communication compromise would equate to consenting to a limitation of their country's sovereignty reminiscent of the 'century of shame'.<sup>91</sup> Therefore, this second scenario is, just like the previous one, unrealistic.

As formerly explained, the Chinese authorities have a strong, historically introjected, aversion to sharing political control of the Chinese Church with a concurrent authority which, besides being a spiritual centre, is also an influential member of the international community. However, this does not imply that they would rule out a compromise agreement on the issue of episcopal appointments in all cases. On the contrary, it is plausible that Beijing's government could eventually overcome its desire for exclusive control and compromise significantly if presented with a solution that it would perceive as securing its interests and prestige.

In the light of this, a mutually acceptable option could - more realistically - be devised starting from the above-mentioned right to consultation, "whereby the Pope is completely free to choose but, at the same time, he recognizes that the appointment may be of legitimate concern to the secular authorities, and he

---

<sup>91</sup> "The period from 1830-1949, often referred to as 'the century of shame and humiliation', ushered in a new tradition of nationalism. During this period China was repeatedly defeated by foreign powers and forced to sign a number of damaging "unequal treaties." Additionally, China was rocked by a series of embarrassing internal conflicts and rebellions against the crumbling Imperial government. Modern-day Chinese remember this period well, and have since vowed prevent any future injury to their nation's pride." (*U.S.-China Policy Foundation Bulletin*, "Dr. William Johnson's Policymakers Seminar Series Lecture", 6 May 2005, <http://www.uscpf.org/html/events/2005/drjohnsonlecture.html>. Accessed 23 April 2007).

therefore offers them a means of voicing their interest.”<sup>92</sup> Such an option offers a selection process that, giving some actual leverage to the civil authorities, would presumably be palatable to the Chinese.<sup>93</sup> Moreover, even though the right to consultation is not a right of veto, but entails solely the Holy See’s moral obligation not to make an appointment in case of legitimate dissent,<sup>94</sup> the fact that the whole consultative process is ordinarily carried out in strict secrecy might greatly facilitate the parties in reaching a win-win agreement. However, for an agreement to be attained, “a deep sense of realism would be required, both on the part of the Holy See and of the Chinese authorities.”<sup>95</sup> On their part, the Chinese would have to recognize that the “spiritual and ordinary relations”<sup>96</sup> between bishops and the Pope are essential aspects of the Catholic faith, and reform the Chinese Catholic Bishops’ Conference.<sup>97</sup> In exchange for these concessions, they could ask the Holy See to make extra-ordinary concessions such as: the bishops’ registration with the government (although not with the CPCA); the Chinese clergy’s non-intervention in political affairs; and the government’s right to be informed in advance on “the diocesan activities concerning those aspects of the life of the ecclesial community that fall within the civil sphere.”<sup>98</sup> Of course, the Supreme Pontiff’s right to have the final say on episcopal appointments and the bishops’ right to a “visible and

---

<sup>92</sup> Gerald Chan, “Sino-Vatican Diplomatic Relations: Problems and Prospects”, p. 826.

<sup>93</sup> Notably, the right of consultation was never mentioned by the decree *Christus Dominus* among the obstacles to the liberty of the Church. (Joel Benoit D’Onorio, “Appointment of Bishops”, in Philippe Levillain, *The Papacy: An Encyclopedia*, p. 89).

<sup>94</sup> Jean-Louis Harouel, “The Methods of Selecting Bishops Stipulated by Church-State Agreements in Force Today”, p. 64.

<sup>95</sup> Angelo Lazzarotto, “Progress in Religious Freedom in China?”.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibidem*

<sup>97</sup> In order to obtain the approval of the Holy See, the new Chinese Catholic Bishops Conference should be independent from civil authorities to the extent of being the final reference point in pastoral and ecclesial affairs. This reformed body should include both the ‘official’ and the ‘underground’ bishops.

<sup>98</sup> Benedict XVI, *Letter of the Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI to the Bishops, Priests, Consecrated Persons and Lay Faithful of the Catholic Church in the People’s Republic of China*.

concrete communion with the Pope”<sup>99</sup> should be once and for all recognized for the Catholic Church.

In spite of some ‘accidents along the way’,<sup>100</sup> the current situation shows a trend towards a solution revolving around consultations between the two sides. On the one hand, the Holy See’s public approval of some of the bishops selected by the Chinese government suggests that they have been designated with Rome’s *placet*;<sup>101</sup> on the other hand the Chinese appear to “have mixed an electoral system with papal appointment and state confirmation.”<sup>102</sup> Hypothetically, an example of a working agreement based on the right of consultation could be the following. At the beginning of the negotiations<sup>103</sup> on the choice of a Chinese bishop, each party would advance a *terna* of names.<sup>104</sup> Once a consensus has been reached on a candidate, the Holy See and the Chinese government would simultaneously issue a communiqué to announce the name of the future bishop. Rome would declare that, after consultations with the authorities of the PRC, the Holy Father has appointed,

---

<sup>99</sup> Ibidem

<sup>100</sup> ‘Accidents along the way’ is the expression used by Cardinal Bertone to describe the episcopal ordinations that occurred without the apostolic mandate in 2006. (Gianni Valente, “The long road and ‘accidents along the way’”).

<sup>101</sup> For example, in May 2006, a few days after episcopal ordinations took place without the Pope’s permission, Fr Paolo Pei Junmin was ordained Assistant Bishop of Shenyang with Papal approval. A Vatican source told *AsiaNews* on the eve of the ordination that “Fr Pei Junmin received the approval of the Holy Father.” “And he is an excellent candidate from all points of view.” (*Asianews.it*, “Bishop approved by Pope to be ordained tomorrow in Shenyang”, 6 May 2006, <http://www.asianews.it/index.php?l=en&art=6096&dos=71&size=A>. Accessed 20 June 2007). The new bishop was one of a group of Chinese bishops who were granted an audience with Benedict XVI in August 2005. He was consecrated a priest in 1992 and became one of the first Chinese priests to be sent overseas for further studies - in his case to Philadelphia in the United States. (*Asia-Pacific News*, “China ordains bishop with Vatican approval, eases tension”, 7 May 2006, [http://news.monstersandcritics.com/asiapacific/news/printer\\_1161942.php](http://news.monstersandcritics.com/asiapacific/news/printer_1161942.php). Accessed on 20 June 2007).

<sup>102</sup> Stephen Haliczzer, “Papal Control Over the Appointment of Bishops”. In 2005, *vaticanista* Sandro Magister wrote: “This twofold approval has become almost a generalized reality. Year after year, Rome has extended its recognition to the bishops that the Chinese government has installed with the intention of creating a separate Church. And in return, the Chinese authorities now tacitly accept the fact that the new bishops formally elected according to the procedures established by the government have the prior approval of the Holy See.” (Sandro Magister, “Rome Is Calling Beijing - But the Connection Keeps Getting Interrupted”).

<sup>103</sup> In which no representative of the CPCA should participate.

<sup>104</sup> In case the two parties can not agree on any of the six names, each party would propose a new *terna*.



X as Bishop of Y. Beijing would instead declare that it *acknowledges* that the Holy See, after consultations with the government of the PRC, has appointed X as Bishop of Y.<sup>105</sup> During the consecration liturgy, the newly appointed bishop should aver his communion with the successor to Peter.<sup>106</sup> Finally, within a few days after his ordination, the bishop should register with the government (but not with the CPCA).<sup>107</sup> The new bishop would then automatically become a member of the reformed Chinese Catholic Bishops' Conference, autonomous from the government and sanctioned by the Holy See.<sup>108</sup>

Even though a settlement of the issue of the Episcopal appointments is the minimal condition for the normalization of the Sino-Pontifical relations, in point of fact, numerous problems regarding important aspects of ecclesial life would remain unresolved.<sup>109</sup> The most serious of these is "the abusive infiltration of all, or nearly all, of the Church's structures by the CPCA."<sup>110</sup> Like all institutions, the CPCA - with its capillary structure and "hundreds of thousands of people (perhaps even one million) who live thanks to its activities"<sup>111</sup> - has one paramount goal: its own perpetuation. Consequently, the CPCA leaders are determined to show that they are

---

<sup>105</sup> The two parties could, alternatively, release a joint communiqué.

<sup>106</sup> This declaration of unity with the Pope could be similar to that made in October 2005 by Joseph Xu Zhixuan, a bishop of the province of Szechuan, at the ordination of his auxiliary bishop. At the beginning of the consecration liturgy, Zhixuan told those present that the ordination was taking place with the approval of the Holy See, in addition to its recognition by the government. (Sandro Magister, "Rome Is Calling Beijing - But the Connection Keeps Getting Interrupted").

<sup>107</sup> PIME missionary Angelo Lazzarotto suggests that "Churches and other religious organizations" should be allowed to "register directly with the RAB, without having to go through the Patriotic Associations." According to the Catholic expert, "such a reasonable form of compromise would ensure both the authority of the State and more freedom of conscience for the citizens." ("Progress in Religious Freedom in China?").

<sup>108</sup> This modality of registration with the authorities could be also used to regularize the position of the 'underground' bishops.

<sup>109</sup> Problems such as "the many arbitrary restrictions that affect admission and teaching in the seminaries, the free preaching of moral teaching in church, baptism of babies in Christian families, and freedom of association for Catholics." (Gianni Criveller as quoted in Sandro Magister, "Diplomatic Relations with China? Maybe, but on One Condition").

<sup>110</sup> Ibidem

<sup>111</sup> Angelo Lazzarotto as quoted in Włodzimierz Redzioch, "What future of the Church in China?".

indispensable to protect China's interests and prestige and have a strong motivation in wrecking every initiative aimed at improving Holy See-China relations. In sum, the CPCA represents a massive boulder obstructing the path of dialogue.<sup>112</sup> For political and ideological reasons,<sup>113</sup> it is unrealistic to hypothesize that the Chinese government would dismantle the CPCA for the sake of its relations with the Apostolic See. However, the government could decide to implement a progressive neutralization (that is, exauthoration) of Liu Bainian's organization, in order to substantially reduce the CPCA's pervasive control over the Church's institutional life. This choice, besides marking a turning point in China's religious policy, would be interpreted by the Apostolic Palace as the clearest sign of Beijing's commitment to normalize its relations with the Holy See.

### *Taiwan: an Ancillary (but not Unimportant) Issue*

To this day, Chinese officials continue to point at the Holy See's diplomatic recognition of Taiwan as one of the two hurdles to the normalization of Sino-Pontifical relations. As previously noted, the Holy See has kept its mission to China in Taiwan since the early 1950s. However, since 1972, the Apostolic Nunciature in Taipei has been entrusted to a chargé d'affaires ad interim rather than to a nuncio.<sup>114</sup> Moreover, in the last decade Rome has repeatedly and publicly

---

<sup>112</sup> Fr Bernardo Cervellera, *Asia News*' editor, subscribes to this view of the CPCA. In January 2008, the Catholic expert said : "The real problem now in the dialogue between China and the Vatican is the Patriotic Association, the function of the Patriotic Association, because this organization is still thinking in a Stalinistic way." (Bernardo Cervellera as quoted in Sabina Castelfranco, "Vatican, China Seek Closer Diplomatic Ties").

<sup>113</sup> As previously noted, patriotic associations are a pillar of the Party-State's religious policy. The demise *tout court* of the CPCA would, in all probability, have serious repercussions on the CPC's internal equilibrium.

<sup>114</sup> Apostolic Nunciature to China, *In Celebration of the 60 Years of ROC/Holy See Diplomatic Relations*, p. 1.

indicated through various prominent ecclesiastics, including Cardinal Zen - who is known for his firm stance against the religious policy of the Chinese government<sup>115</sup> - that the Apostolic See is ready to downgrade its relations with Taiwan to a sub-diplomatic level.<sup>116</sup> Thirdly, history shows that, for the PRC, a country's recognition of Taipei was never an insurmountable obstacle for negotiating the establishment of formal relations. For instance, although the United States had full diplomatic relations with Taiwan,<sup>117</sup> Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai gladly received President Nixon in 1972. More recently South Korea's (1992) and South Africa's (1998) shift of recognition from Taiwan to the PRC came after the conclusion of laborious negotiations with Beijing for which the severing ties with Taipei was not a pre-condition.<sup>118</sup>

For these reasons, what has been so far presented by Beijing as one of the two main obstacles to the normalization of relations is actually a secondary problem whose solution depends on the reaching of a compromise on the Chinese government's policy of political control over the Catholic Church in China. Oslo-based analyst, Magda Hornemann, summarized this ancillary nature of the Taiwan problem by writing that "it would seem that the issue of Taiwan is a public relations point more than a substantive one."<sup>119</sup> Dr Chou-seng Tou, the Taiwanese ambassador to the Holy See, was even more forthright when he declared: "China uses Taiwan as a

---

<sup>115</sup> Ambrose Leung and Felix Chan, "Taiwanese 'hurt' by Zen's remarks", *South China Morning Post*, 24 March 2006, <http://www.scmp.com/portal/site/SCMP/menuitem.06f0b401397a029733492d9253a0a0a0/?vgnnextoid=81e5bd9b07221110VgnVCM100000360a0a0aRCRD&s=Archive>. Accessed 18 April 2007.

<sup>116</sup> "Relevant Chinese authorities have been informed for many years that, with a comprehensive agreement, the Holy See is ready to solve the Taiwan issue in a proper manner." Gianni Criveller, "The smoke screen of China's preconditions for relations with the Holy See".

<sup>117</sup> Not to mention the American military assistance to, and collaboration with, the Kuomintang government.

<sup>118</sup> Gianni Criveller, "The smoke screen of China's preconditions for relations with the Holy See".

<sup>119</sup> Magda Hornemann, "China's Catholics, the Holy See and religious freedom".

pretext, while the real problem is that of religious freedom.”<sup>120</sup> However, the weight of the Taiwan factor in the Sino-Pontifical interaction should not be underestimated. The fact that Rome’s recognition of Taipei is an ancillary question, does not necessarily imply that it is unimportant. In fact, if it is true that Taiwan now appears to stand on the sidelines of the debate on the Apostolic See’s ties with China,<sup>121</sup> it is equally true that isolating Taiwan is one of Beijing’s main motivations for exchanging ambassadors with the Holy See. As a Taiwanese scholar pointed out, if Taiwan loses the Holy See, there can be only one winner in the cross-Strait diplomatic strife.<sup>122</sup> Finally, the fact that the issue of Taiwan is not addressed in Benedict XVI’s letter to the Chinese Catholics should not be interpreted as a relegation of this theme to the realm of unimportance. Leaving aside that the cross-Strait issue lies outside of the scope and the *sensus* of the Papal document, the non-mention of the Taiwan question seems to be a subtle way to indirectly remind Beijing that Rome has already clarified its position on the matter.

Indeed, the Holy See has been crystal clear on its readiness to relocate its nunciature to mainland China. Statements like Cardinal Tauran’s - “If they [the PRC authorities] give us the possibility, we’re ready tomorrow”<sup>123</sup> - are anything but ambiguous. However, Taiwan is a democracy that guarantees actual religious freedom to its 300,000 Catholics.<sup>124</sup> Although the Holy See has important reasons

---

<sup>120</sup> Chou-seng Tou As quoted in *Christian Today*, “Taiwan Remains a Question as Vatican-China Relations Progress”, 19 May 2005, [www.christiantoday.co.uk/article/taiwan.remains.a.question.as.vatican.china.relations.progress./2922.htm](http://www.christiantoday.co.uk/article/taiwan.remains.a.question.as.vatican.china.relations.progress./2922.htm). Accessed 31 May 2007. Dr Tou has been the Taiwanese ambassador to the Holy See since January 2004.

<sup>121</sup> Ruey-jay Fong, “Holy See offers new paradigm for Taiwan”, *Taipei Times*, 05 July 2007, p. 8.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibidem*

<sup>123</sup> Jean-Louis Tauran as quoted in Richard Spencer, “Vatican ready to sacrifice Taiwan for China”, *Telegraph*, 16 May 2005, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2005/05/16/wvati16.xml&sSheet=/portal/2005/05/16/ixportal.html>. Accessed. 12 September 2007.

<sup>124</sup> As Ambassador Tou pointed out, “the issue of Taiwan is not addressed in the [Benedict XVI’s] letter. But all the negative things he mentions have positive counterexamples in Taiwan: religious freedom, episcopal ordinations, no persecution. All the difficulties that the Pontiff listed and that the

for seeking formal relations with the PRC,<sup>125</sup> a country where “as many as 150,000 adults”<sup>126</sup> received (Roman Catholic) baptism in 2007, it cannot give the impression that its diplomatic choices - like states’ - are dictated by political opportunism (*realpolitik*). For an international actor that claims to be a “moral authority” rather than “a political power”,<sup>127</sup> the price in terms of image would be too high. As Fr Gianni Criveller remarked: “In Taiwan, the Church is free and at peace. [...] Taiwan is small, and China is big: but is this argument really valid?”<sup>128</sup> For this reason, Pontifical officials like Archbishop Celestino Migliore, the Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations, always takes special care to specify that the Holy See is “ready to go back to Beijing without abandoning Taiwan.”<sup>129</sup> These words echo those of Cardinal Tauran in November 2005: “If and when the normalization [of relations with China] happens,” the Holy See would find an “appropriate way”<sup>130</sup> to maintain ties with Taiwan.<sup>131</sup> Although the Pope’s diplomats to date have not advanced any specific formulas for balancing relations between the PRC and Taiwan, they have indicated that precedents already

---

Church encounters in the mainland do not exist on Taiwan.” (Chou-seng Tou as quoted in *Asianews.it*, “China needs the Catholic Church, says Taiwan’s Ambassador Tou”, 5 July 2007, [www.asianews.it/index.php?l=en&art=9744](http://www.asianews.it/index.php?l=en&art=9744). Accessed 9 July 2007).

<sup>125</sup> There are some 300,000 Catholics in Taiwan, but an estimated 12 million in the PRC where the Catholic Church reckons there’s a spiritual hunger without an established religious system to serve it. “Missionary experts believe that, if the government were to loosen its control, those 12 million Catholics on the mainland could become 120 million within a generation.” (John Allen, “China, Taiwan and the Vatican”).

<sup>126</sup> *Canale 5*, “Terra!”, television interview to Fr Bernardo Cervellera, 23 March 2008.

<sup>127</sup> “But does the Holy See have a political influence? If one understands ‘political’ to mean a strategy aimed at imposing one’s interests, the answer is no. [...] I would not speak of ‘the Holy See as a political power’ but rather of ‘the Holy See as a moral authority’.” (Jean-Louis Tauran, *Is the Holy See a Political Power?*, p.2).

<sup>128</sup> Gianni Criveller as quoted in Sandro Magister, “Diplomatic Relations with China? Maybe, but on One Condition”.

<sup>129</sup> Celestino Migliore as quoted in Tim Puet, “Vatican diplomat expresses hope for normalizing relations with China”, *Catholic News Service*, 13 March 2007, <http://www.catholicnews.com/data/stories/cns/0701419.htm>. Accessed 28 March 2007.

<sup>130</sup> Jean-Louis Tauran as quoted in *Taipei Times*, “Vatican envoy vows support”, 23 November 2005, p. 3.

<sup>131</sup> Similarly, Fr Criveller said he believed that, even if the nunciature to China is transferred to Beijing, “the Holy See will keep alive its human, cultural, religious, and social contacts with the people and authorities of Taiwan.” (Gianni Criveller as quoted in Sandro Magister, “Diplomatic Relations with China? Maybe, but on One Condition”).

have been set by other countries. In the words of Monsignor Migliore: "We need only to think of those countries that have embassies in Beijing while at the same time maintaining official commercial, scientific and cultural relations with Taipei."<sup>132</sup>

The Taiwanese are fully aware of the sword of Damocles hanging over their diplomatic relations with the See of Peter. As Ambassador Tou explained: "We are somewhat the victims of the Holy See's strong desire for rapprochement with the mainland."<sup>133</sup> In the light of this situation, it seems that Taipei has decided to make virtue of necessity by expressing its understanding of Rome's efforts towards diplomatic relations with the PRC. The Holy See, said an official of Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2005, is "a different kind of political entity from other countries. It's a leader of a worldwide religion and therefore its main concern is expanding religious freedom around the world."<sup>134</sup> At the same time, Taiwan asked "to be treated with dignity and respect"<sup>135</sup> in case the Holy See switches recognition to Beijing. A similar sympathetic stance was adopted also by Dr Tou, in 2005 as well as in the aftermath of the publication of the 2007 Papal letter.<sup>136</sup>

Over the past decade, Taiwan's government has repeatedly issued statements reminding the Holy See that Taipei, unlike Beijing, upholds religious freedom. In January 2008, Taiwan's president even wrote a letter to Benedict XVI to ask him to

---

<sup>132</sup> Celestino Migliore as quoted in Tim Puet, "Vatican diplomat expresses hope for normalizing relations with China". Plausibly, the Apostolic See would show its will not to abandon Taiwan by sending a high-ranking prelate as Apostolic Delegate to Taipei.

<sup>133</sup> Chou-seng Tou as quoted in John Allen, "China, Taiwan and the Vatican". Dr Tou added: "We're the victims, but we also understand."

<sup>134</sup> Anonymous Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs official as quoted in Chang Yun-ping, "MOFA urges the Vatican to be fair", *Taipei Times*, 24 November 2005, p. 2.

<sup>135</sup> Ibidem

<sup>136</sup> *AsiaNews.it*, "China needs the Catholic Church, says Taiwan's Ambassador Tou". Dr Tou has a deep understanding of Catholicism. In April 2006, the Taiwanese diplomat - who already had a Catholic wife and two Catholic sons - became a Roman Catholic himself. (Carol Glatz, "Taiwan's ambassador to Vatican baptized a Catholic", *Catholic News Service*, 20 April 2006, <http://www.catholicnews.com/data/stories/cns/0602270.htm>. Accessed 16 January 2007).

support Taipei's bid to join the United Nations and to participate fully in other international organizations.<sup>137</sup> Such appeals are little more than public relations declarations with little practical import. Clearly, Taiwan can exert little leverage over the Holy See.<sup>138</sup> Nevertheless, the fact that the usual cross-Strait rivalry paradigm does not apply to the Apostolic See might play in favour of Taipei. If it is true that Taiwan cannot engage in cheque-book diplomacy with the Holy See, it is equally true nor can China.<sup>139</sup> The Apostolic Palace is not interested in receiving foreign aid or signing trade agreements but in obtaining religious freedom for the Chinese flock. The Holy See is ready to change the nature of relations with Taiwan, provided that "religious freedom is realized in China."<sup>140</sup> Therefore, as long as there is no actual religious freedom in the PRC, as long as an acceptable compromise on episcopal appointments cannot be reached, the Holy See will be very reluctant to shift recognition to Beijing.<sup>141</sup> Therein lie Taipei's hopes to maintain its crucial ally. In other words, Taiwan counts on its diplomatic rival's intransigence on religious freedom, and it nourishes the hope that the moment of a major change in Sino-Pontifical relations is not nigh. In Dr Tou's words: "When I entered the Foreign Service thirty years ago, my first job was to track affairs in Europe, including the Vatican. I remember people telling me, 'Look out, something is about to happen, the Vatican is going to move its embassy to Beijing.' It's thirty

---

<sup>137</sup> Cindy Wooden, "Taiwan's president asks pope to support bid to join United Nations", *Catholic News Service*, 10 January 2008, <http://www.catholicnews.com/data/stories/cns/0800157.htm>. Accessed 12 January 2008.

<sup>138</sup> As Dr Raymond Tai - Tou's predecessor as Taiwanese ambassador to the Holy See - said back in 1999: "In reality, there is little we can do if the Holy See seeks normalized relations with Peking." (Raymond Tai as quoted in Myra Lu, "Holy See urged to respect ties", *Taiwan Journal*, 26 March 1999, <http://taiwanjournal.nat.gov.tw/site/Tj/ct.asp?xItem=17034&CtNode=122>. Accessed 17 January 2007).

<sup>139</sup> Ruey-jay Fong, "Holy See offers new paradigm for Taiwan".

<sup>140</sup> Jean-Louis Tauran as quoted in *Taipei Times*, "Vatican envoy vows support". The same position was restated in 2006 by Monsignor Ambrose Madtha, the then Holy See's Chargé d'Affaires ad interim in Taiwan. The Pontifical diplomat said: "If religious freedom in China is guaranteed, it is okay to move the embassy from Taipei to Beijing." (Ambrose Madtha as quoted in Chang Yun-ping, "Top envoy says Vatican ready to relocate embassy", *Taipei Times*, 30 March 2006, p. 3).

<sup>141</sup> Sabina Castelfranco, "Vatican, China Seek Closer Diplomatic Ties".

years later, and we're still waiting. I don't believe this is going to happen anytime soon.”<sup>142</sup>

Taiwanese hopes might be well founded. Both the Apostolic Palace and the Chieh Shou Hall<sup>143</sup> are aware that ending diplomatic ties with Taiwan before having secured religious freedom for the Church in China would leave the Holy See in a substantially weaker position. Rome, in fact, could not continue to offer the severing of relations with Taipei as a *quid pro quo* for the improvement of the condition of Chinese Catholics. Moreover, in the interregnum between the denouement of diplomatic relations with Taipei and the exchange of ambassadors with the PRC, the Apostolic See would remain without any nunciature on Chinese (China and Taiwan) soil.<sup>144</sup> This is a scenario that the Holy See cannot even contemplate, especially because negotiations with Beijing's government might drag on - with little results - for years. Last but not least, once relations with Taipei were severed, for the Holy See it would certainly be more difficult to use Taiwan as “a bridge between mainland Catholic communities and the Vatican.”<sup>145</sup> Indeed, the following statement, pronounced in March 2006 by Monsignor Madtha, the then

---

<sup>142</sup> Chou-seng Tou as quoted in John Allen, “China, Taiwan and the Vatican”, *National Catholic Reporter*, 25 November 2005, <http://www.nationalcatholicreporter.org/word/word112505.htm>. Accessed 23 March 2007.

<sup>143</sup> Until 2006, Taipei's Presidential Office Building was officially referred to as Chieh Shou Hall.

<sup>144</sup> The Holy See considers the nunciature in Taipei as its embassy to whole of China, not to Taiwan only. As declared by Cardinal Sodano - the then Secretary of State of the Holy See - in 1999: “The Taipei nunciature is the nunciature in China.” (Angelo Sodano as quoted in Erik Eckholm “In Bid to Court China, Pope Weighs Visit To Hong Kong”, *New York Times*, 12 February 1999, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9504E4D8163AF931A25751C0A96F958260>. Accessed 2 May 2007).

<sup>145</sup> Jean-Louis Tauran as quoted in Lawrence Chung, “Vatican official vows to back Taipei links”, *South China Morning Post*, 26 November 2005, <http://www.scmp.com/portal/site/SCMP/menuitem.06f0b401397a029733492d9253a0a0a0/?vgnnextoid=b66961b086b21110VgnVCM100000360a0a0aRCRD&s=Archive>. Accessed 4 April 2007. Apparently, this view of Taiwan as a bridgehead for engaging mainland China was endorsed by Benedict XVI even before his election to Pontificate. As Dr Tou revealed, when he paid a visit to the then Cardinal Ratzinger in 2004, “Cardinal Ratzinger told me at that time that he hoped the people of Taiwan could help people in China gain freedom.” Chou-seng Tou as quoted in Melody Chen, “Envoy to the Vatican reveals secret weapon”, *Taipei Times*, 27 May 2005, p. 2).



Holy See's Chargé d'Affaires ad interim in Taipei, is valid even today: "So far, relations between the Vatican and Taiwan remained stable."<sup>146</sup>

### *Conclusion*

This chapter has shown that China's motivations for exchanging ambassadors with the Holy See are grounded in Chinese geopolitical ambitions and domestic policy considerations. The analysis has also shown that the Holy See's motivations for pursuing normalization of relations with Beijing are primarily doctrinal and institutional. Nonetheless, the analysis argued that the Apostolic Palace is aware of the geopolitical benefits that having diplomatic ties with the PRC would give to the Holy See. Subsequently, the chapter has analyzed the two obstacles that, according to the Chinese, hamper the diplomatic normalization with Rome: the controversy over the episcopal appointments and the 'Taiwan issue'. After offering a diachronic excursus into the process of selection of Catholic bishops, the chapter has illustrated the forms of intervention available to the secular authorities in such a process. In the light of these elements, the chapter has explored their applicability to the Chinese case and devised a mutually agreeable procedure for the selection of bishops in the PRC. As for relations between the Apostolic See and Taipei, the final part of the chapter has highlighted the ancillary - but not marginal - nature of this issue. Although China routinely raises this issue as a significant impediment to the normalization of relations with the Holy See, there is no necessary reason why

---

<sup>146</sup> Ambrose Madtha as quoted in Chang Yun-ping, "Top envoy says Vatican ready to relocate embassy".

it should rule out negotiations in that direction. The following, and concluding, chapter will examine two models of normalization of relations between a Communist state and the supreme government of the Catholic Church, evaluating their validity for Sino-Pontifical relations. *In fine*, the analysis will identify a practicable pathway towards the establishment of relations between the See of Peter and Beijing.

## **- Chapter VIII -**

### ***Working towards Formal Recognition: Models and Ways Forward***

#### ***Introduction***

The previous chapter has identified the parties' major aims in seeking diplomatic normalization and analyzed the two principal issues that Beijing and the Apostolic Palace have to tackle in order to normalize their relations. This final chapter will investigate two cases of diplomatic normalization between a Communist country and the *Sancta Sedes* and assess their aptness to serve as models for improving Sino-Pontifical relations. Subsequently, the chapter will individuate the initiatives that the Holy See is taking, or should take, in pursuit of formal ties with Beijing and argue that achieving a comprehensive agreement with the PRC will require Rome's great patience and persistence. The analysis will firstly examine the evolution of relations between the Soviet Union - latterly the Russian Federation - and the Holy See. After evaluating the Russian model, the chapter will infer that some relevant differences between the PRC and the Soviet Union/Russian Federation apparently render the applicability of this model to China problematic. However, the chapter will not exclude the validity of the Russian model on the grounds that Moscow's pathway is being successfully followed by a (neo-) Confucian Communist state: Vietnam. The chapter will thus illustrate and

investigate the Vietnamese model. The analysis will compare Vietnamese and Chinese religious policies and outlooks on the 'Vatican issue', concluding that, in substance, what impedes Beijing from following Hanoi's steps is mainly the PRC government's political attitude. The chapter will thus maintain that the Holy See, besides intensifying its diplomatic contacts with Beijing, should launch a vast cultural operation and foster cooperation with China in key areas in order to change the Chinese leaders' view of Catholic Church. The analysis will then highlight some factors, internal to the Catholic Church and the Party-State apparatus, that might facilitate the development of Holy See-PRC relations. Finally, the chapter will claim that the Sino-Pontifical rapprochement is likely to be gradual and incremental due to the absence of consensus among the 'fourth generation' Chinese leadership about the desirability of a normalized relationship with the Apostolic See, the delicate factional balance within the CPC, and the Party's complex decisional dynamics.

### *The Soviet/Russian Model*

In November 2006, Cardinal Bertone declared: "I formulate the hope that relations between the Holy See and China achieve the same results as were achieved between the Holy See and Russia."<sup>1</sup> By pointing to the evolution of relations between the Soviet Union, and subsequently the Russian Federation, and the

---

<sup>1</sup> Tarcisio Bertone as quoted in *30Days*, "A hope for China", October 2006, <http://www.30giorni.it/us/brevi.asp?id=297>. Accessed 23 February 2007.

Apostolic See, the Cardinal Secretary of State seemed to suggest a model for the diplomatic normalization between the See of Peter and Beijing - a practical model that China could follow. And, quite possibly, the steps that led to the current situation - in which the Holy See and Russia have relations of a special nature - and the Soviet/Russian leaders' overtures regarding religious freedom for Catholics, could represent an interesting pathway for China towards the normalization of relations with the Apostolic See.

In 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev's accession to power inaugurated a new season in the domestic and foreign politics of the Soviet Union.<sup>2</sup> Within the country, the new leader promoted *perestroika* - economic and political reform - and launched *glasnost* - "the controlled release of truthful information"<sup>3</sup> - as the crucial planks of his innovative efforts.<sup>4</sup> On the foreign policy side, Gorbachev actively pursued détente with the West. Even relations between Moscow and the Holy See improved steadily in the years following Gorbachev's election.<sup>5</sup> On 25 November 1989, the Soviet leader paid an historic official visit to the Vatican. Gorbachev invited the Pope to make a return visit to the Soviet Union and he and John Paul II agreed in principle to establish diplomatic ties.<sup>6</sup> In fact, three months after that meeting,

---

<sup>2</sup> On 11 March 1985 Gorbachev was elected Secretary General of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union at the Central Committee extraordinary plenum.

<sup>3</sup> David Satter, "Why Gorbachev Lost - Failure of Mikhail Gorbachev's economic policies before the Soviet coup d'état", *National Review*, 23 september 1991, [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m1282/is\\_ai\\_11333948](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1282/is_ai_11333948). Accessed 16 December 2007.

<sup>4</sup> *Perestroika* (literally, 'restructuring') is the program of economic and political reform within the Soviet Union initiated by Mikhail Gorbachev in 1986. *Glasnost* (literally, 'publicity') is a policy launched by the Soviet leader in 1986 permitting open discussion of political and social issues and freer dissemination of news and information. (Mikhail Gorbachev, *Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World*, New York, Harper & Row Publishers, 1987).

<sup>5</sup> Alan Riding, "Pope and Gorbachev to Meet", *New York Times*, 11 September 1989, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=950DE4DB1E3CF932A2575AC0A96F948260>. Accessed 13 December 2007.

<sup>6</sup> John Paul II's reply to the invitation was noncommittal. It appeared that before accepting, he intended to keep on pressing the Kremlin to restore religious freedom to Catholics in the Soviet Union. "According to a spokesman, the Pope 'cordially thanked' his guest, and said he hoped that 'developments would make it possible for him to accept.'" (Clyde Haberman, "The Kremlin and the Vatican; Gorbachev Visits Pope at Vatican; Ties Are Forged", *New York Times*, 2 December 1989,

shortly before the demise of the Soviet state, the Holy See and the Soviet Union established diplomatic relations and exchanged formal representatives.<sup>7</sup> Gorbachev visited the Pope again in November 1990 and outlined for him his new religious legislation, which was followed by the reestablishment of Catholic Church structures in the Soviet Union. Even Boris Yeltsin, made two visits across the Tiber - in 1991 and 1998 - to discuss the new Russian religious law with John Paul II and invited the Roman Pontiff to Moscow.<sup>8</sup>

Despite the invitation by Yeltsin, the Pope - as the supreme head of the Roman Catholic Church - could not visit Russia without a complementary invitation by the head of the host state's main religious group, the Orthodox Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia. During the 1990s, marked by "difficulties of Orthodox-Catholic understanding,"<sup>9</sup> the Patriarch did not invite the Polish Pope on the grounds that - according to the religious leader - the Catholic Church was planning "to undermine Russian Orthodoxy through aggressive proselytizing."<sup>10</sup> Aware of the delicate interdenominational situation in Russia,<sup>11</sup> Vladimir Putin, on the occasion of his

---

<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=950DEFDD173CF931A35751C1A96F948260&sec=&spon=&pagewanted=all>. Accessed 13 December 2007.)

<sup>7</sup> Elena Zhosul, "Russia and the Holy See: A new aspect in the diplomatic dialogue", *Interfax*, 13 March 2007, <http://02varvara.wordpress.com/2007/11/11/russia-and-the-holy-see-a-new-aspect-in-the-diplomatic-dialogue/>. Accessed 16 December 2007.

<sup>8</sup> Shortly before the 1998 meeting, John Paul II petitioned Yeltsin by asking him to designate Catholics as a traditional Russian religious group in the context of the new religious legislation. (Elena Zhosul, "Russia and the Holy See: A new aspect in the diplomatic dialogue").

<sup>9</sup> Elena Zhosul, "Russia and the Holy See: A new aspect in the diplomatic dialogue"

<sup>10</sup> *Radio Free Europe*, "Putin Visits Vatican As Catholic-Orthodox Ties Warm", 13 March 2007, <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2007/03/f5628350-f794-4897-a847-bedfe788ab69.html?napage=2>. Accessed 22 December 2007.

the 2004 Orthodox Encyclopedia, a thirty-volume work in progress "under the aegis of the patriarch of Moscow Alexis II and with the patronage of the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin," reads: "Relations with the Russian Orthodox Church are shadowed by the recurrent proselytism by the Catholic Church in the canonical territory of the Russian Orthodox Churches, and likewise by the aggressive activity of the Greek-Catholics, especially in Galicia, where the temples were expropriated. These acts did not provoke any condemnation by the Holy See." (*30Days*, "The Orthodox Encyclopedia presented in Rome", May 2004, [www.30giorni.it/us/brevi.asp?id=122](http://www.30giorni.it/us/brevi.asp?id=122). Accessed 22 December 2007).

<sup>11</sup> In February 2002, Latin Rite Catholic Apostolic Administrations in Russia were formed into one archdiocese in Moscow, and three dioceses in Novosibirsk, Saratov, and Irkutsk. There is a separate jurisdiction - the Apostolic Exarchate - for Catholics of Russian Rite. In addition, there's an Apostolic Prefecture of Latin Rite (immediately subject to the Holy See) in the easternmost part of

2000 and 2003 visits to Rome, did not reiterate his predecessor's invitation to the Roman Pontiff.<sup>12</sup>

The election of Joseph Ratzinger to Peter's chair marked a sort of watershed in the *Vatikanpolitik* of the Russian Orthodox Church. It can be assumed that the Russian Orthodox spiritual leadership saw in the figure of the new Pontiff the possibility of turning a new page over and establishing more cooperative relations with the Holy See. Since the beginning of the current pontificate, the Third and the First Romes<sup>13</sup> have intensified their ecumenical dialogue, identified non-conflictual areas of cooperation, and joined forces against secularism.<sup>14</sup> However, Russia's 700.000 Catholics are still in a condition of 'inferiority' vis-à-vis their Orthodox brethren.<sup>15</sup> Equally, the Holy See and Moscow do not entertain - at least formally - full diplomatic relations. As previously noted, relations between the Holy See and Moscow are of a special nature: the Pontifical Representative to Moscow and the

---

the country. (*Giga-Catholic Information*, "Catholic Church in Russian Federation", 2008, <http://www.gcatholic.com/dioceses/country/RU.htm>. Accessed 28 December 2007). At present there are about 700.000 Catholics in Russia: 0.5 per cent of the population.

<sup>12</sup> Putin became the first Russian President to publicly state that the Moscow Patriarchate has significant influence on the relations between the Russian Federation and the Holy See. (Elena Zhosul, "Russia and the Holy See: A new aspect in the diplomatic dialogue").

<sup>13</sup> With the fall of Constantinople in 1453, there was a growing tendency to refer to Moscow as the 'Third Rome'. In 1510 the Russian Orthodox monk Filofei addressed a panegyric letter to Tsar Vasili III in which he warned: "And now I say unto Thee, take care and take heed, pious Tsar: all the empires of Christendom are united in thine. For two Romes have fallen, and the Third exists and there will not be a fourth. Thy Christian Empire, according to the great theologian, will not pass away." Moscow, thus, became symbolically the 'Third Rome'. (Bill Bowring, "Moscow: Third Rome, Model Communist City, Eurasian Antagonist - and Power as No-Power?" in Andreas Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos, *Law and the City*, London, Routledge Cavendish, 2007, p 84).

<sup>14</sup> Aid to the Church in Need, *Synthesis Report 2006 on Religious Freedom in the world*, 2007, pp. 5-6.

<sup>15</sup> For example, Catholics are not represented in the Russian Inter-religious Council. This structure is a consultative body founded in January 1999 which embraces representatives of Russia's so-called traditional confessions: Orthodoxy, Islam, Judaism and Buddhism. According to the head of the Russian Orthodox Church's Department for External Church Relations, Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, the Interreligious Council "includes faiths which were always here, which were never imported into Russia." (Metropolitan Kirill as quoted in Geraldine Fagan, "New parliamentary force for 'traditional spiritual values'", *Forum 18 News Service*, 24 March 2003, [www.forum18.org/Archive.php?article\\_id=15&pdf=Y](http://www.forum18.org/Archive.php?article_id=15&pdf=Y). Accessed 29 December 2007). Such a condition is unsatisfactory for the Holy See, which pursues "'equal dignity,' and 'equal freedom.'" for its Russian flock. (Giovanni Lajolo as quoted in *Independent Catholic News*, "Papal envoy comments on his visit to Russia", 31 October 2005, <http://www.indcatholicnews.com/envruss.html>. Accessed 28 December 2007).

Russian Representative to the Holy See do not enjoy ambassadorial status.<sup>16</sup> This situation is due to the Russian government's desire to postpone full diplomatic normalization until more advanced stage of the ecumenical process between the two communions is reached. The fact that Vladimir Putin omitted to invite the Pope to Russia during his March 2007 visit to the Vatican is indicative of the delay in diplomatic normalization.<sup>17</sup> The Holy See clearly understands that the achievement of full diplomatic relations with Moscow is conditional on progress being made in the ecumenical dialogue. For this reason, the Holy See has stepped up its efforts to further engage with the Moscow Patriarchate and the Kremlin, "especially through specifically cultural initiatives."<sup>18</sup>

Like China, the Soviet Union was a Communist giant. Similarly to Gorbachev in the 1980s, the then paramount leader, Deng Xiaoping, and his successors embarked on a reform plan that embraced important, sometimes radical, changes in Chinese society. It would therefore appear sensible and logical to look at Soviet-Pontifical relations in the Gorbachev era, and to the dynamics of the Russo-Pontifical relationship in the 1990s and 2000s, as a model that Beijing could follow. However, some weighty differences between the Soviet Union/Russian Federation and the PRC cast some doubt on the validity of this model for China.

---

<sup>16</sup> On 28 October 2005 Benedict XVI received in audience the new representative of the Russian Federation to the Holy See, Mr Nikolay Sadchikov. "Since the Russian representation to the Vatican does not yet have ambassadorial rank, there was not the exchange of ritual speeches between the Pope and the newly arrived diplomat." (*30Days*, "New Russian representative to the Holy See", October 2005, <http://www.30giorni.it/us/brevi.asp?id=226>. Accessed 29 December 2007).

<sup>17</sup> On the eve of Putin's visit to Rome, the Pontifical Representative to Moscow, Monsignor Antonio Mennini, said that the priority of the meeting "was not identifying with a visit by the Holy Father to Moscow, but with progress in dialogue between Catholics and Orthodox." (Antonio Mennini as quoted in *Boston Globe*, "Pope's envoy hails Putin meeting", 10 March 2007, [http://www.boston.com/news/world/europe/articles/2007/03/10/popes\\_envoy\\_hails\\_putin\\_meeting/](http://www.boston.com/news/world/europe/articles/2007/03/10/popes_envoy_hails_putin_meeting/). Accessed 3 January 2008).

<sup>18</sup> Federico Lombardi as quoted in Robert Mickens, "Putin Visits Vatican but Does Not Invite Pope Benedict XVI to Russia", *Tablet*, 17 March 2007, [home.catholicweb.com/therussianapostolateofprayer/index.cfm](http://home.catholicweb.com/therussianapostolateofprayer/index.cfm). Accessed 3 January 2008. Indeed, cultural engagement - together with diplomatic dialogue and faith-based diplomacy - seems to be the principle informing the Pontifical policy towards the 'Third Rome'.



Firstly, Russia is historically and culturally a Christian and Eurasian country. China is, rather, a (neo-)Confucian-Socialist country. There is therefore potentially more cultural empathy between the First and the Third Rome than between the Apostolic See and the Middle Kingdom. Secondly, Beijing's realist 'Socialism with Chinese characteristics' is very different from Gorbachev's idealistic 'Democratic Socialism' or 'Socialism with a human face'.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, *perestroika* and *glasnost* do not seem to be the cornerstones of Hu Jintao's 'Harmonious Society'. As for *perestroika*, the reform process in China has been overwhelmingly economic rather than political. As for *glasnost*, China is ruled by a bureaucratic-authoritarian establishment that allows little criticism or involvement in policy-making and exerts a tight control over the media. Soviet legislation on religious freedom and the establishment of diplomatic ties with the Holy See were fruits of Gorbachev's Democratic Socialism. The Chinese leadership, by contrast, regards Democratic Socialism as deviationist and dangerous: Zhao Ziyang's 'unforgivable sin'.<sup>20</sup> Thirdly, Rome has two interlocutors in Russia: the civil authorities and the Russian Orthodox Church. The former - unlike in China - are a post-Communist elite who do not call themselves Communist any more. The latter is a national Church independent from secular power, not a government-directed 'patriotic' organization as in the PRC. Fourthly, both Russian interlocutors are - all things

---

<sup>19</sup> In the words of Princeton University Sovietologist Stephen Kotkin, Gorbachev's Democratic Socialism was "a vision of socialism with a human face - a better socialism, a socialism that wouldn't be Stalinist like the Prague Spring in Czechoslovakia in 1968." (Stephen Kotkin as quoted in Jennifer Greenstein Altmann, "Communist ideology one cause of Soviet collapse", *Princeton Weekly Bulletin*, Vol. 91, No. 16, 18 February 2002, <http://www.princeton.edu/pr/pwb/02/0218/7a.shtml>. Accessed 10 February 2008).

<sup>20</sup> Zhao Ziyang, the PRC's premier from 1980 to 1987, and General Secretary of the CPC from 1987 to 1989. Zhao was a reformist. While in office, he furthered bold economic reforms and advocated government transparency and a national dialogue that included ordinary citizens in the policy-making process. He also promoted an open foreign policy, fostering good relations with Western nations that could aid China's economic development. In 1989 he was removed after he took a sympathetic stance toward the student demonstrators in the Tiananmen Square and opposed using military force against them. He spent the rest of his life under house arrest. He died in January 2005. (BBC, "Chinese reformer Zhao Ziyang dies", 17 January 2005, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/4177135.stm>. Accessed 5 February 2008).

considered - willing to improve their relations with the Holy See and compromise to a certain extent on religious freedom for Catholics in Russia. Moreover, given that each party accepts and values the role played by the other two, the trilateral talks with the Kremlin and the Moscow Patriarchate has enabled - and enables - the Holy See to start up a diplomatic autocatysis process<sup>21</sup> towards ecumenical unity and full diplomatic relations. By contrast, the Chinese government, despite its declarations of good will, often gives the impression of actually demanding the Holy See to kowtow.<sup>22</sup> The Chinese rigidity and the absence of a mutually accepted mediator/interlocutor thus render the Sino-Pontifical interaction laborious and difficult.

### *The Vietnamese Model*

The Apostolic Palace is fully aware of these differences between the Soviet/Russian and the Chinese realities. Notably, Cardinal Bertone, in his November 2006 declaration, referred only to the results achieved between the Holy See and Russia, not to the way those results were achieved. In the light of the

---

<sup>21</sup> Autocatysis is also known as positive feedback, “a reinforcing process, amplification, ‘virtuous’ and viscous circles. Positive feedback processes are growth processes, where a small change builds upon itself. A movement is amplified producing more change in the same direction.” (Garry Peterson, “Systems Basics”, *McGill University - Department of Geography*, 22 November 2004, <http://www.geog.mcgill.ca/faculty/peterson/susfut/resilience/systems/systemBasics.html>. Accessed 14 February 2008).

<sup>22</sup> In Imperial Chinese protocol, performing the kowtow (literally ‘knock head’) was a way of showing submission or homage to the Emperor. “It consisted of kneeling and knocking one’s head nine times on the ground before the Manchu Emperor. Thus the envoys of all the world acknowledged the supremacy of the Chinese sovereign.” (*Time*, “Kowtow, 1816”, 17 April 1950, <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,805374-1,00.html>. Accessed 5 February 2008).

forementioned differences, it would then seem that the Soviet/Russian model is inapplicable to China. Yet, this may not be true in absolute terms. There is, in fact, an Asian state, a Communist and (neo-)Confucian country, that in its relations with the Apostolic See has, in many respects, followed the pathway set by Gorbachev and his successors. This country is institutionally similar to China to the extent of being defined as the 'dragon in miniature' by a renowned Italian Sinologist.<sup>23</sup> This country is Vietnam.<sup>24</sup>

Vietnam is one of the Asian states where the Catholic Church is growing the most strongly. This country counts more than six million Catholics (6.7 per cent of the population),<sup>25</sup> steadily increasing in numbers.<sup>26</sup> Since Cardinal Etchegaray's ice-breaking tour to Vietnam in 1989, the Holy See and Hanoi have been engaged in a productive dialogue. In fact, the visit of the French prelate inaugurated a series of visits - fourteen to date - by Holy See delegations led by the Undersecretary of the Section for Relations with States.<sup>27</sup> In 2005 a Vietnamese delegation called on the Vatican and, on 25 January 2007, Vietnam's Prime Minister, Nguyen Tan Dung,

<sup>23</sup> 'Dragon in miniature' is an heteronym for Vietnam employed by Professor Enrica Collotti Pischel in order to highlight the institutional and cultural similarities between Vietnam and China. (Enrica Collotti Pischel, "Vietnam e Cambogia: i metodi tradizionali restano i più efficaci", *Asia Major*, 1999, <http://www.unipv.it/cspe/am995.htm#2>. Accessed 9 December 2007).

<sup>24</sup> Like Deng's China in the early 1980s, in 1986 Vietnam began to introduce momentous liberalization in all sectors of its previously hardline, centrally planned, and autarchic economy. Referred to as *doi moi*, this 'renovation' has produced dramatic changes in the lives of Vietnamese households. Agricultural production has soared. The country now welcomes foreign trade, investment, tourists, business people, students, and scholars. Personal incomes have increased, and Vietnam has joined the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN). (Peter Boothroyd and Pham Xuam Nam, *Socioeconomic renovation in Viet Nam: The Origin, Evolution and Impact of Doi Moi*, Ottawa, IDRC, 2000).

<sup>25</sup> The population of Vietnam is 85,262,356 people (July 2007 estimate). (Central Intelligence Agency, "Vietnam", *The World Factbook*, 20 March 2008, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/vm.html>. Accessed 31 March 2008).

<sup>26</sup> Sandro Magister, "Easter in Vietnam: An Extraordinary Account", *www.chiesa*, 5 April 2007, <http://chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it/articolo/131463?eng=y>. Accessed 5 May 2007.

<sup>27</sup> First Monsignor Celli and then Monsignor Migliore and, more recently, by Monsignor Pietro Parolin. As pointed out by Archbishop Parolin, "the Holy See delegation performs, for a week, the tasks that in other countries are entrusted to the papal legates, given that there is no representative of the Pope present in Vietnam." (Pietro Parolin, "A Church full of life. In a Communist country", *30Days*, February 2007, <http://www.30giorni.it/us/articolo.asp?id=13525>. Accessed 21 October 2007).

paid an historic visit to the Holy See. This visit was, in many respects, reminiscent of Gorbachev's 1989 visit to the Holy Palaces. The premier met Benedict XVI, the Cardinal Secretary of State and the Secretary for Relations with States. On that occasion, "Cardinal Bertone requested that full diplomatic ties between the Vatican and Vietnam be established."<sup>28</sup> Dung "proposed then diplomatic agencies on both sides begin discussing the matter in more detail."<sup>29</sup> In March 2007, Hanoi's authorities proposed to a Pontifical delegation visiting Vietnam, "to create in the coming months a group of experts entrusted with studying a timetable and concrete modalities for starting the process of entering into diplomatic relations."<sup>30</sup> In February 2008, after more than a month of day-and-night prayer vigils and peaceful protests on the grounds of the former Apostolic Nunciature in Hanoi,<sup>31</sup> the Vietnamese government decided to return the building to the Catholic Church.<sup>32</sup> Reportedly, such a decision was made "to show goodwill and respect toward the Pope."<sup>33</sup>

In the light of the positive developments in Pontifical-Vietnamese relations and Church-state relations, it is understandable why Cardinal Zen believes Vietnam "should serve as an example to the Chinese government,"<sup>34</sup> and thinks that

---

<sup>28</sup> Vietnam Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "PM Dung meets Pope, Vatican PM", 26 January 2007, <http://www.mofa.gov.vn/en/nr040807104143/nr040807105001/ns070126100821>. Accessed 9 March 2007.

<sup>29</sup> Ibidem

<sup>30</sup> Pietro Parolin, "A Church full of life. In a Communist country".

<sup>31</sup> The civil authorities confiscated the building in 1959. In January 2008, after that a restaurant that had been located in the structure, the Catholic community started a public protest. The government agreed to return the building, in exchange for an agreement that the public demonstrations would come to an end. (CINS, "Archbishop Joseph Ngo Quang Kiet of Hanoi confirms government concession", <http://www.vaticans.org/index.php?categories/2-Asia-News>, 4 February 2008. Accessed 14 March 2008).

<sup>32</sup> *National Catholic Reporter*, "Vietnam to return nunciature", 22 February 2008, [http://ncronline.org/NCR\\_Online/archives2/2008a/022208/022208c.htm](http://ncronline.org/NCR_Online/archives2/2008a/022208/022208c.htm). Accessed 10 March 2008.

<sup>33</sup> Anonymous Pontifical official as quoted in *National Catholic Reporter*, "Vietnam to return nunciature".

<sup>34</sup> Joseph Zen as quoted in *AsiaNews.it*, "Card. Zen: Beijing should learn from Vietnam and be open to religious freedom", 6 December 2006, [www.asianews.it/index.php?l=en&art=7935](http://www.asianews.it/index.php?l=en&art=7935). Accessed 8 June 2007.

“hopefully the Big Brother China would not fall behind Vietnam in this area [the appointments of bishops].”<sup>35</sup> Actually, there are some elements of difference between the religious policies of the two states, as well as in their respective *Vatikanpolitiks*, that make it difficult for Beijing to follow the steps of Hanoi.

The differences between the state of the relations between the Holy See and Vietnam and those between the former and the PRC can be explained in terms of the different religious policies implemented over the last two decades by the Red Dragon<sup>36</sup> and the dragon in miniature. The most salient difference between the two approaches is the absence, in Vietnam, of a ‘patriotic association’ of Catholics. In fact, although the government requires religious groups to be registered and uses this process to control and monitor Church organizations,<sup>37</sup> there has never been a body like the CPCA in the country, where the Church is united in its loyalty to Rome.<sup>38</sup> This has greatly eased dialogue because, unlike in China, in Vietnam there is not a patriotic association waging a rearguard battle to obstruct the normalization of relations. Rather than setting up a bureaucratic structure to control the local Church from the inside and alienate it from the Apostolic See, the Vietnamese government has progressively come to terms with the pneumo-institutional universalism of the Catholic Church. Consequently, Hanoi has usually allowed Vietnam’s bishops to go Rome and has not tried to nationalize the Vietnamese

---

<sup>35</sup> Joseph Zen as quoted in *Asian Political News*, “H.K. Cardinal says Vietnam-Vatican ties a good model for China”, 5 February 2007, [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m0WDQ/is\\_2007\\_Feb\\_5/ai\\_n17168058/pg\\_1](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0WDQ/is_2007_Feb_5/ai_n17168058/pg_1). Accessed 18 October 2007.

<sup>36</sup> The PRC is known also as the ‘Red Dragon’.

<sup>37</sup> The government officially recognized Buddhist, Roman Catholic, Protestant, Hoa Hao, Cao Dai, and Muslim religious organizations. To obtain recognition a group must obtain government approval of its charter and leadership. (U.S. Department of State, “Vietnam - Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - 2006”, 6 March 2007, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/78796.htm>. Accessed 27 October 2007).

<sup>38</sup> “There was a minor attempt to create one, a while ago, but this failed and the Church remained as one.” (Joseph Zen as quoted in *AsiaNews.it*, “Card. Zen: ‘Beijing should learn from Vietnam and be open to religious freedom’”).

Catholic Bishops' Conference, which is recognized by the Holy See.<sup>39</sup> In addition, Hanoi has recently removed many limits on priestly ordinations and recruits to the seminary.<sup>40</sup>

The second relevant difference is that Vietnam and the Holy See have agreed to a common process for the selection of bishops. It appears to be a rather radical form of the procedure based on the 'right of consultation': the episcopal appointments are currently made by the Pope from among a *terna* of candidates proposed by the Holy See, any of whom the civil authorities can reject.<sup>41</sup> Although this method has not yet been formalized, over the years it has proved to be a working system for selecting the Vietnamese bishops.<sup>42</sup> Thirdly, the religious policy of the Vietnamese government is comprehensively articulated in the Ordinance on Beliefs and Religions of 29 June 2004.<sup>43</sup> This document hinges on the two principles according to which religious believers and groups "are an integral part of the nation and the state undertakes to respond to their legitimate needs."<sup>44</sup> In China, by contrast, although in the early 1980s there were consultations to prepare a basic law on religious policy, the past twenty-five years have seen more than fifty new regulations and documents, issued at every level of the public administration -

---

<sup>39</sup> *AsiaNews.it*, "Card. Zen: 'Beijing should learn from Vietnam and be open to religious freedom'".

<sup>40</sup> Previously, the Government allowed the Church to recruit new seminarians only every two years. All students had to be approved by the Government, both upon entering the seminary and prior to ordination as priests. (U.S. Department of State, "Vietnam - Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - 1998", 26 February 1999, <http://www.vietquoc.com/hum-rite.htm>. Accessed 27 October 2007).

<sup>41</sup> Sandro Magister, "Easter in Vietnam: An Extraordinary Account". The U.S. Department of State 2007 Report on Human Rights Practices reveals that, in February 2007, "the government rejected the appointment of two Catholic bishops endorsed by the Vatican." (U.S. Department of State, "Vietnam - Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - 2007", 11 March 2008, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/100543.htm>, . Accessed 17 March 2008).

<sup>42</sup> "As regards, for example, the ordinations of bishops, the Church and government in Vietnam work with one accord. I do not know the exact way it works, but they [Vietnam's authorities] explained to me that there is no unique formula: each case is discussed together reasonably. This approach is far superior to the current Chinese situation." (Joseph Zen as quoted in *AsiaNews.it*, "Card. Zen: 'Beijing should learn from Vietnam and be open to religious freedom'").

<sup>43</sup> Socialist Republic of Vietnam, *Ordinance on Beliefs and Religions*, 29 June 2004, [http://vbqppl3.moj.gov.vn/law/en/2001\\_to\\_2010/2004/200406/200406180007\\_en/lawdocument\\_view](http://vbqppl3.moj.gov.vn/law/en/2001_to_2010/2004/200406/200406180007_en/lawdocument_view). Accessed 3 January 2008.

<sup>44</sup> Pietro Parolin, "A Church full of life. In a Communist country".

central, provincial and local - "aiming only to assure a more efficient control over religions."<sup>45</sup> Finally, in the last lustrum, religious freedom in Vietnam has received small but significant concessions. Especially in the urban areas, the authorities are gradually easing their control over the activities of the Catholic Church. For example, the Ho Chi Minh City government is facilitating certain Church-managed charitable activities in combating AIDS.<sup>46</sup> In addition, in many places local government officials consented to the Church to impart religious education classes (outside regular school hours).<sup>47</sup>

In essence, what differentiates Vietnam's religious policy from that of the PRC is the divergent approaches taken by their respective governments. The Vietnamese leadership has opted as one for a political line of constructive dialogue and gradual normalization of relations with the Holy See.<sup>48</sup> Although there are still serious restrictions to religious freedom, the evolution underway is definitely promising.<sup>49</sup> In fact, it is evident that Hanoi thinks it is in its interest to engage with religious groups and, in the case of Catholicism, allow the Holy See to have a normal diplomatic presence in Vietnam. The Chinese government, by contrast, has no single stand on religion. Although the overall situation of religious believers has undeniably improved since the 'Deng Era', the authorities are still pursuing a religious policy model that is profoundly informed by an idea of peculiar

---

<sup>45</sup> Angelo Lazzarotto, "Progress in Religious Freedom in China?"

<sup>46</sup> "However, other activities and permits for Catholic NGOs remained suspended." (U.S. Department of State, "Vietnam - Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - 2007").

<sup>47</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Vietnam - Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - 2007".

<sup>48</sup> However, according to Archbishop Joseph Ngo Quang Kiet of Hanoi, in the Vietnamese establishment there is a faction holding to "conservative views" which represents a barrier to the normalization of relations with the Holy See. (Joseph Ngo Quang Kiet as quoted in *Catholic Online*, "Gov't, church leaders laud Vatican-Vietnam meeting", 30 January 2007, [http://www.catholic.org/international/international\\_story.php?id=22865](http://www.catholic.org/international/international_story.php?id=22865). Accessed 13 September 2007.

<sup>49</sup> At the end of his visit to the Apostolic See, Vietnam's premier said: "the Catholic community is a dynamic, God-loving and patriotic community that has made active contributions to national construction and development." (Nguyen Tan Dung as quoted in Vietnam Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "PM Dung meets Pope, Vatican PM").

caesaropapism.<sup>50</sup> Paradoxically, in this model the atheist Party-State exerts institutional (and even doctrinal) control over religious groups. As for the normalization of relations with the *Sancta Sedes*, the government keeps - as previously explained - an ambivalent line of dialogue and inflexibility.

These elements reveal that, within the Chinese leadership, there is an absence of consensus about the issue of religious freedom and the desirability of a normalized relationship with Rome. Besides pragmatic and progressive figures, in the government and the CPC's Central Committee "there are ideologist conservatives who do not accept any kind of permissivism."<sup>51</sup> Far from being a monolithic body, the CPC is a gargantuan organization embracing more than seventy million members. Although its statutes forbid its members to profess any religion, it is common knowledge that numerous CPC members have become religious believers. As Fr Lazzarotto highlighted: "the recent research has shown that over 30% of the party members are believers!"<sup>52</sup> On the other hand, the CPCA and the SARA are - mainly for very mundane reasons - leftist strongholds. This internal factionalism impedes the Chinese leadership in making significant steps towards the normalization of relations with the Holy See. Given that negotiating means making concessions on both sides, a leader would hardly make any significant concessions to the Holy See if it might expose him to accusations of weakness and ideological deviationism by his political opponents. For this reason, the current Chinese leaders

---

<sup>50</sup> Caesaropapism is a political system in which the secular power has authority over the Church and all religious matters. On caesaropapism in Asian societies, see John M. Hobson, "Explaining the Rise of the West: A Reply to Ricardo Duchesne", *The Journal of the Historical Society*, December 2006, Vol. 6, No. 4, pp. 579-599.

<sup>51</sup> Angelo Lazzarotto as quoted in Angelo Lazzarotto as quoted in Włodzimierz Redzioch, "What future of the Church in China?"

<sup>52</sup> Ibidem



probably reckon it to be politically wise to abide by the consolidated religious policy and postpone to the future the solution of the 'Vatican question'.<sup>53</sup>

### *Ways forward*

Yet, it would be to incorrect to infer *a priori* that the 'Vietnamese way' - a model reminiscent of the Gorbachevian *Vatikanpolitik* - is not suitable for China. Progress in Sino-Pontifical relations depends, in the first instance, on the political will of the Chinese leadership. *Ergo*, if the Chinese authorities are determined to take the Vietnamese road, problems can be successfully overcome and negotiations with Rome finalized. The CPCA itself is not an insurmountable obstacle. As Norwegian analyst, Magda Hornemann, points out, "without continuing state support the Catholic Patriotic Association has the potential to disintegrate."<sup>54</sup> The real obstacle, then, is probably the tendency of the Chinese apparatus to look at the Holy See solely as a centre of secular power and diplomatic influence and persist in China's ossified religious policy. This tendency is revealed by the government's insistence in identifying, in official documents and declarations, the Holy See with the Vatican and in regarding the Pope only as the sovereign of the VCS. An old Chinese adage says: "When the teacher points to the moon with his finger, the wise sees the moon and the idiot sees the finger." The Chinese leaders are not idiots, but

---

<sup>53</sup> Cardinal Zen believes that internal factionalism within the CPC is one of the factors which are hindering the normalization of relations between Beijing and the Holy See. The Hong Kong Cardinal declared: "I think China's supreme authorities are too taken up by other things, including an ongoing power struggle. They do not have the time and still less, the courage, to come forward to negotiate with the Holy See, [...] Those who are not firm in their position and secure of their power would not dare to make concessions, because this would be dangerous. One could be accused of weakness, for example, and because of this fear, everything is always postponed." (Joseph Zen as quoted in *AsiaNews.it*, "Card. Zen: Beijing should learn from Vietnam and be open to religious freedom").

<sup>54</sup> Magda Hornemann, "China's Catholics, the Holy See and religious freedom".

the modern heirs of an ancient tradition of government and the rulers of a world power. Certainly, they must be aware of the dual nature of the Holy See. So, they must reckon it is in the Party-State's interest to keep on gazing at the Vatican-finger rather than watch the Holy See-moon. In other words, they see diplomatic relations with the Holy See and religious freedom for Catholics as dangers rather than opportunities.

As explained in Chapter VI, the Roman Catholic Church, because of its transnational (universal) and hierarchical character, is perceived as a menace by Beijing. China's rulers, characteristically concerned about foreign interference, are particularly worried about the influence that the Holy See may exert within China. Having a clear source of power outside the country has always made the Catholic community in the PRC dangerous in the eyes of the Communist leadership. Therefore, they are highly suspicious of the institutional and doctrinal reality of the Church and look at its supreme government and leader mainly through political lenses. Plausibly, with this in mind, in November 2005 Sr Betty Ann Maheu wrote that Benedict XVI "must somehow convince the government in China that the mission of the Church is religious, not political."<sup>55</sup> A few months later, Cardinal Zen reformulated this concept in explicit terms by urging the Chinese authorities to drop their "prejudiced" view of the Catholic Church and see the Pope "as a religious leader, not a politician."<sup>56</sup> Besides being an exhortation to go beyond Communist dogmatic secularism, Cardinal Zen's words represent a prodding to the Chinese rulers to change their mind-set and develop a new and deeper understanding of the Catholic Church. With his statement, the Hong Kong prelate

---

<sup>55</sup> Betty Ann Maheu as quoted in Magda Hornemann, "China's Catholics, the Holy See and religious freedom".

<sup>56</sup> Joseph Zen as quoted in Jonathan Cheng, "Change mind-set, Zen urges Beijing".

also signalled to the ecclesiastic hierarchy that, in order to successfully engage with the PRC, it is necessary to change the Chinese leaders' perception of the Catholic Church. This is a very large task, which primarily requires a profound knowledge of the CPC's internal dynamics and of Chinese cultural and political *umwelt*.<sup>57</sup>

Indeed, the core of the Sino-Pontifical question, even before being ideological and political, is cultural. Given that contemporary Chinese leaders and government officials are all but immune to the influence of the traditional mentality, the conflict of authority and *weltanschauung* between the Party-State and the Catholic Church is not only the result of the current political system, but has roots in China's old philosophy of power. Because of China's lengthy Confucian tradition, the same inertia of the old cultural and social norms exists also for domestic and foreign policies. Ideological prejudices, vested interests and uncertainty in the social and political dynamic combine with political tradition and beget a negative feedback, one reinforcing the leadership's cultural resistance to change the established religious policy and *Vatikanpolitik*. Therefore, with its mixture of Communist authoritarian control, Confucian mentality, proud patriotism and constantly growing presence on the global economic and political arena, "China represents a giant philosophical rival to the Vatican."<sup>58</sup>

This cultural factor is strengthened by the realist factor, *id est* the renowned Chinese authorities' pragmatic and utilitarian approach to international relations and domestic policy.<sup>59</sup> Thus, whether diplomatic relations with the Holy See will

---

<sup>57</sup> *Umwelt* is a German term for all the environmental influences shaping an individual's behaviour, or the environment as it is experienced by the individual. The word was introduced in 1909 by the Estonian biologist Jacob Johann von Uexküll (1864-1944). (John Deely, "Semiotics and Jakob von Uexküll's concept of umwelt", *Sign Systems Studies*, Vol. 32.1/2, 2004, pp. 11-34).

<sup>58</sup> Daniel Williams, "Thaw Seen in Vatican-China Relations", *Washington Post Foreign Service*, 16 October 2005, p. A24.

<sup>59</sup> This pragmatic approach is epitomized by Deng Xiaoping's famous remark about the irrelevance of colour to a cat's mice-catching ability.

be established and actual religious freedom will be conceded to Catholics depends also on whether the government thinks it is in its interest to strengthen the ties of Chinese Catholics to the Apostolic See.<sup>60</sup> Clearly, the Communist rulers' primary interest is retaining and consolidating their monopoly of political power and preserving social stability. Unlike Chinese Imperial society, where emperors did openly acknowledge their entitlement to the throne and privileges, China's Communist leaders claim to be representatives of the people.<sup>61</sup> For this reason, today the Chinese government must be "at least 'hypocritical'"<sup>62</sup> in justifying its rule and needs to limit social discontent that may trigger an uprising in the name of the very people the CPC claims to represent. Thus, for the sake of its own survival, the government needs not only to deliver on the economic front, but also to stabilize Chinese society.<sup>63</sup>

China's social stability is undermined by many factors: the sharply increasing socio-economic polarization, the urbanization and proletarianization of millions of peasant,<sup>64</sup> the rampant corruption among government officials, the progressive dismantlement of the cradle-to-grave welfare system, et cetera.<sup>65</sup> The Communist

---

<sup>60</sup> Magda Hornemann, "China's Catholics, the Holy See and religious freedom".

<sup>61</sup> "The Communist Party of China represents the interests of the masses and people; [...] the Communist Party of China is the pioneers of the working people and representing the fundamental interests of workers and the masses." (*Press Center of the 17<sup>th</sup> CPC National Congress*, "Flag and emblem of Communist Party of China", 7 October 2007, <http://english.cpcnews.cn/92277/6277917.html>. Accessed 15 February 2008).

<sup>62</sup> Yun Zhou, "Towards the Rule of Law in Contemporary China: An Educational Approach", *Perspectives*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 31 August 2001, [http://www.oycf.org/Perspectives/13\\_083101/rule\\_law\\_china.htm](http://www.oycf.org/Perspectives/13_083101/rule_law_china.htm). Accessed 10 August 2007.

<sup>63</sup> In October 2007, China-expert Sidney Rittenberg said: "Economic growth and social security, social welfare, should be tied together instead of the sort of one-sided emphasis on grow, grow, grow." (Sidney Rittenberg as quoted in Beckie Loewenstein, "Continuity the Theme of the 17th Party Congress").

<sup>64</sup> "In recent years, between 150 and 200 million Chinese citizens" have moved, temporarily or permanently, to the urban areas. (Nick Anstead, "China Road: A Journey into the Future of a Rising Power by Rob Gifford", *Nick Anstead Weblog*, 25 July 2007, <http://www.nickanstead.com/blog/?p=425>. Accessed 18 October 2007).

<sup>65</sup> As *Foreign Affairs'* John L. Thornton remarks, "Now its [China's] leaders and people must deal with popular dissatisfaction with local government, environmental degradation, scarce natural

leaders have made a 'Faustian pact' with the Chinese new middle classes: the latter have been granted the freedoms to consume and to own in exchange for renouncing the demand for "the one thing the Chinese government is fearful of them asking for: political power."<sup>66</sup> Therefore, real threats to the CPC's rule might come not from the 'haves', but from further down the socio-economic ladder. Namely, from the masses of 'have nots'. Notably, in 2005 there were no fewer than 80,000 incidents of rural unrest in the PRC.<sup>67</sup> For this reason, the government is profoundly suspicious of those entities which, in its eyes, could mobilize "the dispossessed, disaffected, and angry"<sup>68</sup> against the established order. From the authorities' viewpoint, religious groups - like Falun Gong and Tibetan Lamaist Buddhists - are definitely among these entities. In this context, Chinese Catholics' ties with the Holy See may reinforce the Communist leaders' culturally and ideologically entrenched prejudice against the Catholic Church, seen as a fifth column of 'imperialist forces' and a destabilizing actor. As maintained above, the union of realist considerations and culturally-grounded mistrust heightens Chinese authorities' reluctance to normalize relations with the Holy See and accord more religious freedom to Catholics.

This synergy between realist politics and cultural hostility suggests that China represents a double confidence-building challenge for the Holy See. Therefore, in order to convince the Chinese establishment that the Catholic Church is not an

---

resources, an underdeveloped financial system, an inadequate health-care system, a restless rural population, urbanization on a massive scale, and increasing social inequality. Most of these problems, of course, have existed throughout the period of reform. What is different now is that the pace of change is accelerating while the ability of the state to manage that change is not keeping pace." (John L. Thornton, "China's Leadership Gap", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 85, No. 6, November/December 2006, p. 133).

<sup>66</sup> Nick Anstead, "China Road: A Journey into the Future of a Rising Power by Rob Gifford".

<sup>67</sup> Beckie Loewenstein, "Continuity the Theme of the 17th Party Congress", *US-China Today*, 9 November 2007, <http://uschina.usc.edu/ShowFeature.aspx?articleID=889>. Accessed 14 November 2007.

<sup>68</sup> Ibidem

‘enemy’ of the PRC and does not pose a threat to the country’s stability,<sup>69</sup> the Holy See should implement a wide-ranging and multi-level strategy. On the one hand, the Apostolic Palace should intensify its efforts to change the perceptions of Chinese political leaders through regular diplomatic interactions between the Holy See and Beijing. On the other hand, it should launch a vast cultural operation to persuade Chinese officialdom to abandon biased assumptions and convictions inherited from the past and stiffened by leftist thinking.<sup>70</sup>

There is little doubt that, in recent years, the Holy See has, more than ever, considered China as a major frontier it needs to reopen. In November 2004, Cardinal Camillo Ruini, the then Cardinal Vicar of Rome, noted that the attention given up to then to Islam should also be afforded to China, since the Middle Kingdom was one of the emergent countries having “the capacity and the will to be protagonists, not subordinates, on the global stage.”<sup>71</sup> Consequently, since the very beginning of Benedict XVI’s pontificate, the Apostolic Palace has launched an unprecedented charm offensive towards the Asian giant. Rome, though, is aware that “diplomatic relations are not a only a goal, but rather a starting point.”<sup>72</sup> Even if the relationship between the Holy See and China were normalized soon, it is highly improbable that crackdowns on Chinese Catholics, especially those enforced by provincial and local authorities, would completely disappear. Realistically, during the short to medium-term future, the best that the Church could expect is “a

---

<sup>69</sup> It should be kept in mind that the CPC tends to equate stability with its monopoly of power and with elite interests. (Minxin Pei, “China’s Precarious Balance: Political and Social Cohesiveness and Stability in a Fast-Changing Society”, in Institute for National Strategic Studies, *Asian Perspectives on the Challenges of China*, Washington D.C., National Defense University Press, 2001, pp. 49-56).

<sup>70</sup> Angelo Lazzarotto, “Progress in Religious Freedom in China?”.

<sup>71</sup> Camillo Ruini as quoted in Daniel Williams, “Thaw Seen in Vatican-China Relations”, *Washington Post Foreign Service*, 16 October 2005, p. A24.

<sup>72</sup> Pietro Parolin as quoted in Giovanni Peduto, “La testimonianza di mons. Pietro Parolin sulla recente visita di una delegazione vaticana in Viêt Nam”, *Vatican Radio*, 17 March 2007, [http://www.radiovaticana.org/radiogiornale/ore14/2007/marzo/07\\_03\\_17.htm#vietnam](http://www.radiovaticana.org/radiogiornale/ore14/2007/marzo/07_03_17.htm#vietnam). Accessed 19 June 2007.

reduction in the frequency of these incidents.”<sup>73</sup> A normalized relationship would mean that the Holy See would have more leverage over the central government. However, given that crackdowns on religious groups are often decided at the local level and in ambits that are controlled by the Ministry of Public Security and the state security organs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs - to which the Apostolic Palace would be directly relating - would be unable to exert much influence unless it were backed by top governmental authorities.<sup>74</sup> Moreover, the directives of the central government would often be thwarted by the aforementioned ‘policies above and counter-policies below’ syndrome.

The Holy See, thus, needs to coordinate its diplomatic efforts with a wide-ranging and patient initiative aimed at making Chinese officialdom acknowledge religion as a defining element of social life and recognize the largely untapped potential of religious groups in terms of their contribution to social harmony. This idea has been recently expressed by Monsignor Gianfranco Ravasi, the President of the Pontifical Council for Culture, who declared: “We intend to arrive also at the ‘edge’ of China, to look onto this great country and seek dialogue with it.”<sup>75</sup> According to the logic of conflict fractioning,<sup>76</sup> in order to step up dialogue and broaden mutual knowledge it is then indispensable to promote cooperation in low-conflict areas, especially in the cultural, social and educational sectors. By collaborating in these spheres, the parties would experience constructive resolution

---

<sup>73</sup> Magda Hornemann, “China’s Catholics, the Holy See and religious freedom”.

<sup>74</sup> Ibidem

<sup>75</sup> Gianfranco Ravasi as quoted in Paolo Rodari, “Conversazione con monsignor Ravasi: la cultura secondo Ratzinger”, *Riformista*, 31 gennaio 2008, [www.palazzoapostolico.it/dblog/stampa.asp?articolo=285](http://www.palazzoapostolico.it/dblog/stampa.asp?articolo=285). Accessed 5 February 2008. Benedict XVI appointed Monsignor Ravasi head of the Pontifical Council for Culture in November 2007.

<sup>76</sup> Roger Fisher, “Fractioning Conflict”, in *International Conflict and Behavioural Sciences: The Craigville Papers*, New York, Basic Books, 1964, pp. 91-109. Roger Fisher, a conflict management specialist, discussed fractioning conflict as an attempt to deal with conflict more successfully. This approach, also described as incrementalism, attempts to break a larger conflict into manageable pieces. Agents of change will work on resolving smaller parts of the conflict before attempting to deal with larger issues.

and develop mutual trust. With time, it would become possible for them to progress to work on resolving larger issues. In particular, dialogue between the Catholic Church and China at the high intellectual level “can have an influence on the situation in the long term, though not immediately.”<sup>77</sup> This is probably the driving principle behind the important academic agreements that the Pontifical Salesian University signed in 2007 with three Chinese Universities.<sup>78</sup>

Although scholars can play an important role in the development of mutual understanding and cultural empathy between the Catholic Church and China, the Holy See’s initiative is not limited to academia, but touches many other areas. In the last decade, many Western Catholic charities and missionaries have increasingly operated within China. Although these agencies had to cooperate with the CPCA, the Church had the opportunity to demonstrate the benefits of the involvement of non-secular actors with religious motivations in addressing China’s social problems.<sup>79</sup> The next step for Rome is eventually convincing the Chinese government to allow religious orders devoted to the poor, like the Order of the Missionaries of Charity (also known as the Sisters of Mother Teresa), to start pilot welfare projects in China.<sup>80</sup> In sum, the *Sancta Sedes* appears determined to build

---

<sup>77</sup> Adolfo Nicolais as quoted in Gerard O’Connell, “China, Intellectual Apostolate Rank Among Top Jesuit Priorities”, *UCA News*, 12 March 2008, <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/USCCBnews/message/2069>. Accessed 24 March 2008. Adolfo Nicolais is the new Superior General of the Jesuits. On 8 March 2008, when he presented the conclusions of the thirty-fifth General Congregation of the Society of Jesus, the cleric said that intellectual apostolate, especially in Asia, and attention to China are two of the top five priorities of his order.

<sup>78</sup> The three Chinese universities are: Fudan University (Shanghai), Zhejiang University (Hangzhou) and Beijing Foreign Studies University. The agreements include the exchange of students and professors and ten scholarships for Chinese students every year. (Gianfranco Coffele, “Convenzione dell’UPS con tre università cinesi”, *Pontificia Università Salesiana - News*, 25 July 2007, <http://www.ups.urbe.it/index.php?method=news&action=zoom&id=186>. Accessed 29 August 2007).

<sup>79</sup> Raphaela Schmid, “Zen in Venice: An Interview”, *First Things*, 30 July 2007, <http://www.firstthings.com/onthesquare/?p=809>. Accessed 6 August 2007.

<sup>80</sup> In April 2005, the Chinese government invited the Order of the Missionaries of Charity Sisters to China. In mid-July, Reverend Mother Nirmala, the head of the Order, visited Qingdao, a city of Shandong province. Due to the opposition of the CPC leftists, to date the Missionaries of Charity



the atmosphere of confidence needed for facing the most complex and thorny aspects of Sino-Pontifical relations in the future. This resolve signals that Rome believes that mutual trust and Chinese leaders' new understanding of the impact and the role of religion in their national social context are the necessary prerequisites for a comprehensive entente between the Apostolic See and China.

Today, within the Catholic Church and the Chinese political apparatus, there are some elements that might foster the positive evolution of Holy See-PRC relations pursued by the Pope's diplomats. As for the Catholic Church, the past three years of the current pontificate have been marked by three important factors: the elevation to prominent positions in the Catholic hierarchy of figures who have a profound knowledge of China; a better synergy within the Roman Curia and between it and those prelates and Catholic experts who are deeply immersed in the Chinese reality; and the issuing of the Papal letter to Chinese Catholics: a pivotal document which is programmatically a doctrinal and 'political' beacon for relations with the PRC. These factors have already been introduced and discussed in the previous chapters. However, it may be useful to revisit the first and the second of them.

The most significant 'new figure' in the high Catholic echelons, one that can greatly favour the Holy See's understanding of China, is certainly Cardinal Joseph Zen. Since the bestowal of the Cardinalate to Zen, it has been perfectly clear that the Pontiff counts on this Chinese Salesian to work amidst the knotty relations

---

have not been able to open an institution in China. (Shuma Raha, "The house that Mother built", *Telegraph*, 2 September 2007, [http://www.telegraphindia.com/1070902/asp/7days/story\\_8265270.asp](http://www.telegraphindia.com/1070902/asp/7days/story_8265270.asp). Accessed 20 December 2007).

between the Holy See and the Middle Kingdom. While some observers might argue that Zen's frank personality is an obstacle to dialogue with the PRC, Benedict XVI seems to have read "precisely in the fine points of this not easy character that authority which Beijing requires from every interlocutor."<sup>81</sup> Actually, as Italian *vaticanista* Paolo Rodari remarks, "Beijing's is a government that tends to respect tough figures, intransigent in certain issues, like Zen."<sup>82</sup> The role of the Chinese prelate as demiurge of the normalization of relations with China was confirmed and enhanced when Cardinal Zen was entrusted by Benedict XVI to compose the meditations for the 2008 *Via Crucis* (Way of the Cross) procession in Rome<sup>83</sup> "as a sign of the priority that the Vatican gives to the dialogue with China."<sup>84</sup> Notably, the Stations of the Cross were illustrated in this *Via Crucis* order of service in an oriental style<sup>85</sup> and, among the cross-bearers, there were a young woman and a young priest from China.<sup>86</sup>

The change of key personnel decided by Benedict XVI has brought to Rome Monsignor Fernando Filoni to be the Substitute of the Secretariat of State for the First Section of General Affairs. As reported in Chapter V, during his long period

---

<sup>81</sup> Paolo Rodari, "La Realpolitik del Papa verso la Cina passa dalla Via Crucis al Colosseo", *Riformista*, 6 March 2008, <http://www.palazzoapostolico.it/dblog/articolo.asp?articolo=310>. Accessed 10 March 2008.

<sup>82</sup> Ibidem

<sup>83</sup> The Way of the Cross is also called Stations of the Cross, *Via Crucis*, and *Via Dolorosa*. "These names are used to signify either a series of pictures or tableaux representing certain scenes in the Passion of Christ, each corresponding to a particular incident, or the special form of devotion connected with such representations." (Cyprian Alston, "Way of the Cross", in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. XV, New York, Robert Appleton Company, 1912, <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15569a.htm>. Accessed 26 March 2008). In its present form, the *Via Crucis* consists of fourteen stations 'visited' by the cross. The most popularly attended Way of the Cross at the present day is that in the Colosseum at Rome, presided by the Roman Pontiff - who also acts as cross-bearers - on the Good Friday.

<sup>84</sup> Richard Owen, "Cardinal Zen 'tones down' criticism to avoid rift between Rome and Beijing", *Times*, 21 March 2008, <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/faith/article3594280.ece>. Accessed 1 April 2008.

<sup>85</sup> Ibidem

<sup>86</sup> Frances D'Emilio, "Pope Presides at Good Friday Procession", *Associated Press*, 22 March 2008, <http://www.wtop.com/?nid=105&sid=1370252>. Accessed 23 March 2008.

of duty in Hong Kong as a cultural adviser to the nunciature in the Philippines (1992-2001), Filoni acted as John Paul II's bridge, liaising with Chinese bishops - both 'official' and 'clandestine' - and reconciling the great majority of the 'official' ones with the Pope.<sup>87</sup> Being "like chief of staff or secretary general in the Secretariat of State, the central office at the heart of the Roman Curia,"<sup>88</sup> Monsignor Filoni will plausibly have a crucial role in productively harmonizing and directing the Catholic Church's efforts towards China and fostering departmental coordination of the negotiations with Beijing.

The Papal 'China initiative' will benefit also from the presence in the Curia of the prelate who, together with Filoni and Zen, is probably the most knowledgeable about the Church in China and the whole history of the Sino-Pontifical negotiations. As stated by Beatrice Leung: "Since 1980, the real influential figure in China affairs has been Archbishop Claudio Celli, the former head of the China Desk of the Council of State of the Vatican."<sup>89</sup> His involvement in Chinese affairs has continued over the years and has not stopped even when he left the China Desk in the early 1990s for the post of Secretary of the Administration of the Patrimony of the Apostolic See and subsequently, in June 2007, became the President of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications.<sup>90</sup> In fact, for his unabated contribution to the promotion of diplomatic dialogue between the Holy See and China and Vietnam, he was awarded the Freinademetz Prize for 2005.<sup>91</sup> In June

---

<sup>87</sup> Gianni Valente, "Iraq for the Iraqis. Interview with Archbishop Fernando Filoni", *30Days*, April 2004, <http://www.30giorni.it/us/articolo.asp?id=3652>. Accessed 25 May 2007.

<sup>88</sup> Gerard O'Connell, "Key Vatican appointment signals that Benedict's chosen team fully in place".

<sup>89</sup> Beatrice Leung, "Sino-Vatican Relations at the Century's Turn", p. 359.

<sup>90</sup> *Signis*, "Archbishop Celli Named New President of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications", 27 June 2007, [http://www.signis.net/article.php3?id\\_article=1481](http://www.signis.net/article.php3?id_article=1481). Accessed 3 July 2007.

<sup>91</sup> This award, granted by the Missionaries of the Society of the Divine Word, together with the Missionary Sisters of the Holy Spirit and the 'China-Zentrum' group, "is conferred on persons who have contributed in an extraordinary way to a better understanding between the cultures and peoples

2006, as previously reported, he went to Beijing with another Curial diplomat to meet with various figures of the Chinese government.<sup>92</sup>

Benedict XVI has, by this point, filled all key positions in the Roman Curia with men of his own choosing: Cardinal Bertone *in primis*. Indeed, the well-oiled collaboration between Benedict XVI and Cardinal Bertone is perfect to the extent that “what the Pope does not do, his Secretary of State does.”<sup>93</sup> This assures a better coordination within the Roman Curia and makes the implementation of Pontifical *Sinopolitik* more efficient and flexible. In addition, the Pope has promoted synergy between the Curia and those ecclesiastics and experts who are well-versed in China’s religious policy, even institutionalizing it in the ‘Commission For China’. This body was established by the Pope in 2007 “to study the most important questions concerning the life of the Church in China.”<sup>94</sup> Its first meeting, held in the VCS in March 2008, was chaired by Cardinal Bertone and attended by more than fifteen Holy See high-level officials; five bishops, including Cardinal Zen, and ecclesiastics from Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan; and nine experts on the Church in China from a number of religious congregations.<sup>95</sup>

On the Chinese side, the advancement towards the normalization of Sino-Pontifical relations might be favoured by the ongoing (and controlled) process of generational

---

of China and Europe. The honor is named after Josef Freinademetz (1852-1908), a Society of the Divine Word missionary, who gave his life for the Gospel in China.” (*SVD News*, “Archbishop Claudio Maria Celli, secretary of the Administration of the Patrimony of the Holy See was awarded the Freinademetz Prize for 2005 for his efforts to improve Vatican - China relations”, 25 September 2005, <http://www.svdireland.com/news/022005.htm>. Accessed 14 October 2007).

<sup>92</sup> *Spero News*, “Vatican delegation goes to Beijing”.

<sup>93</sup> Sandro Magister, “Tarcisio Bertone, the Carry-on Cardinal”, *www.chiesa*, 14 March 2008, <http://chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it/articolo/193961?eng=y>. Accessed 15 March 2008.

<sup>94</sup> Gerard O’Connell “Commission For China Reaffirms Holy See Wants ‘Respectful And Constructive Dialogue’”, *UCA News*, 14 March 2008, [http://www.catholic.org/international/international\\_story.php?id=243488](http://www.catholic.org/international/international_story.php?id=243488). Accessed 18 March 2008.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibidem*

change and elite transformation within the CPC leadership.<sup>96</sup> China's complicating social environment is forcing the government to recruit and co-opt new talents into the ranks of the apparatus in order to help the Party-State to cope more effectively with, and adapt to, the socio-economic and cultural changes the country is undergoing.<sup>97</sup> The Chinese ruling elite is aware that the current system is at risk of becoming, in a number of ways, a closed system; one impervious to categories of new ideas and changes. The price that the CPC *regimen* may pay for its sclerotization could be too high; namely, increasing civil unrest and even the loss of the Party's monopoly of political power. Therefore, bringing 'fresh blood' into the CPC leadership is a necessity, not an option. However, this new blood, although co-opted by the privileged, may nevertheless have a different mind-set from that of their senior peers.<sup>98</sup> As a result of a less Sino-centric upbringing, the new generation of leaders is likely to have a more worldly and less ideological mentality and a more nuanced and sympathetic understanding of the social role of religion. In the mantic words of Deng Xiaoping: "When our thousands of Chinese students abroad return home, you will see how China will transform itself."<sup>99</sup>

As the current 'fourth generation' Chinese leaders,<sup>100</sup> "are better educated than their elders (often at China's prestigious universities),"<sup>101</sup> so the future 'fifth

---

<sup>96</sup> Kristen Parris, "Elite Transformation and Institutional Change: The Recent Party Congresses in China", *Daniel Aaron Lazar*, 8 September 2007, <http://www.daniellazar.com/wp-content/uploads/elite-transformation-and-institutional-change.doc>. Accessed 3 February 2008.

<sup>97</sup> Yun Zhou, "Towards the Rule of Law in Contemporary China: An Educational Approach".

<sup>98</sup> *Ibidem*

<sup>99</sup> Deng Xiaoping as quoted in Daniel Aaron Lazar, "Politics in The People's Republic of China (PRC)", *Daniel Aaron Lazar*, November 19th, 2007, <http://www.daniellazar.com/wp-content/uploads/politics-in-china-lecture-2007.doc>. Accessed 3 February 2008.

<sup>100</sup> The concept of the 'fourth generation' is a highly political categorization. It originates with Deng Xiaoping's claim to represent the 'second generation' of Chinese leaders after Mao Zedong's Long March generation. "It is part of Deng's desire, in the wake of the Tiananmen massacre of 1989, to make a smooth transition to a 'third generation' of leaders represented by Jiang Zemin. This formulation seeks to obscure the difficulties involved in political successions in the PRC, which in the past were characterized by the overthrow of leaders amid disruption and controversy, as in the virulent, 'winner take all' struggles of the Cultural Revolution and its aftermath." (Kristen Parris, "Elite Transformation and Institutional Change: The Recent Party Congresses in China").

generation' leaders will probably be more travelled and global-minded than their predecessors and often have a foreign studies background. These new leaders, having a lay but not secularist attitude towards religion, and an acute awareness of practical gains and losses, perhaps will be able to "think around the corner"<sup>102</sup> and see the great potential of the warming of relations with the supreme government of the Catholic Church.<sup>103</sup> Yet, even China's current technocratic leaders, on the strength of eminently pragmatic considerations, might find the political will (and courage) to take the path followed by the Soviet Union and Vietnam.

The benefits of the establishment of diplomatic relations with the *Sancta Sedes* are rather evident. As argued in Chapter VII, the attainment of a comprehensive settlement with the Holy See would constitute a very positive achievement for the PRC government. In the international sphere, the normalization of relations with the Holy See would bring on a positive international reaction in the Western world and would signal a positive outlook towards the 'one China' policy.<sup>104</sup> On the domestic front, the normalization of relations with the Holy See would definitely represent an internal victory for the government, consolidating the power of Hu Jintao's faction within the Party. Furthermore, the establishment of formal ties with the Apostolic Palace would permit Catholic welfare agencies to step up their

---

<sup>101</sup> Ibidem. "Indeed, starting in the early 1980s, Deng Xiaoping and Chen Yun worked hard to rejuvenate the party ranks. By the early 1990s, cadres at all levels of the system were younger and better educated than their counterparts only a decade earlier. [...] Hu Jintao is very much a product of this process of rejuvenation and regularization." (John J. Tkacik, Jr., Joseph Fewsmith and Maryanne Kivlehan, "Who's Hu? Assessing China's Heir Apparent, Hu Jintao", *Heritage Foundation*, 19 April 2002, <http://www.heritage.org/Research/AsiaandthePacific/HL739.cfm>. Accessed 2 November 2007).

<sup>102</sup> Hubertus Hoffmann, "The Pope and Beijing". This expression was coined by Fritz Kraemer.

<sup>103</sup> For example, "with its small flock of committed Chinese Catholics, Rome would like to make a positive contribution to developments in China." The country, thus, could substantially benefit from "the integration of an elite [well-educated Catholics], so important for the further progress of the country, which would be comparable the contribution of the Huguenots in the sparse Prussia of Friedrich the Great, which brought about a great leap forward onto the forefront of Europe more than 200 years ago." (Hubertus Hoffmann, "The Pope and Beijing").

<sup>104</sup> Angelo Lazzarotto, "Progress in Religious Freedom in China?"

activities of in China, thus helping to defuse the danger of future social unrest in the country.

However, the evident practical and political advantages of formal ties with the Apostolic Palace might be necessary but not sufficient for inducing the PRC government to pursue rapprochement with the Holy See. In fact, the present Chinese leaders cannot make decisions based only on their personal convictions, but must take into account that “decisional dynamics within the CPC are moving toward collective leadership, compromise, and deliberative decision making.”<sup>105</sup> “Despite his apparent grip on most levers of power, Hu lacks the authority of a Deng Xiaoping.”<sup>106</sup> Unlike Deng and Jiang Zemin, albeit being the top Party official, he is not the dominant, ‘great’, leader. As Western Washington University’s Kristen Parris highlights, Hu does not derive his power and authority from personal charisma or from the power of an elder Party mentor, but must have the support of other faction-leaders to govern.<sup>107</sup>

Given that factional dynamics within the CPC profoundly influence the government’s policymaking,<sup>108</sup> Hu and his allies must strike a balance among the Party’s major factions when it comes to crucial domestic and foreign policies. Sino-Pontifical relations are considered “one of the most delicate and thorny issues”<sup>109</sup> for the Communist government. It is, thus, an issue on which Hu’s and

---

<sup>105</sup> Kristen Parris, “Elite Transformation and Institutional Change: The Recent Party Congresses in China”.

<sup>106</sup> Willy Wo-lap Lam, “Life of Chinese Communist Party”, *Korea Times*, 11 October 2007, [http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/opinion/2008/04/160\\_11745.html](http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/opinion/2008/04/160_11745.html). Accessed 3 February 2008.

<sup>107</sup> Kristen Parris, “Elite Transformation and Institutional Change: The Recent Party Congresses in China”.

<sup>108</sup> Willy Wo-lap Lam, “Life of Chinese Communist Party”.

<sup>109</sup> Anonymous Chinese high officials of Jiang Zemin’s entourage as quoted in Bernardo Cervellera, *Missione Cina*, p. 209.

Wen's leadership could be challenged by hostile factions disguising their political ambitions under the cloak of ideological dispute.<sup>110</sup> Being preoccupied with reconciling the intense factional competition within "an increasingly tribalized Party,"<sup>111</sup> the current leaders are very likely to refrain from making any move that, by exacerbating internal divisions, would weaken their leadership. They could do otherwise only if they enjoyed a broad and solid cross-factional consensus on a major change in China's *Vatikanpolitik*. Thus, what is needed is a 'Copernican revolution' in the mind-set of the majority of Communist cadres. Only a new perception of the Catholic Church among the Party-State apparatus would, most plausibly, enable the PRC leaders to undertake effective initiatives (not mere symbolic gestures) towards the granting of actual religious freedom to Catholics and diplomatic normalization with the Holy See.

Expecting the heirs of a tradition of government of several thousand years to drastically change their view of religion and religious policy within a few years would be an unrealistic anticipation. In China, a great civilization with its own ancient history and traditions, while changes in the political sphere can sometimes unfold rapidly and violently, changes in the elite's cultural core usually ripen and take place slowly and gradually.<sup>112</sup> Moreover, as in the past, the path and the pace of change will be shaped largely by internal forces and the decisions of its

---

<sup>110</sup> The nature of CPC factions during the past years has undergone a substantial change. Beginning with the Jiang Zemin's presidency, most factions no longer divide along ideological lines. "Such power blocs are now more concerned with obtaining more senior posts and political resources for their supporters and more economic benefits for the regions they represent and the businesses run by factional affiliates." (Willy Wo-lap Lam, "Life of Chinese Communist Party").

<sup>111</sup> Willy Wo-lap Lam, "Life of Chinese Communist Party".

<sup>112</sup> Donald Zagoria, "An Emerging China in a World of Interdependence: A Report to the Trilateral Commission", book review, *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 1994, Vol. 73, No. 5, <http://www.foreignaffairs.org/19940901fabook8838/yoichi-funabashi-michel-oksenberg-heinrich-weiss/an-emerging-china-in-a-world-of-interdependence-a-report-to-the-trilateral-commission.html>. Accessed 10 November 2007.



'mandarins', who "govern their country in accord with their own vision."<sup>113</sup> Therefore, successfully engaging with China, changing its leaders' perception of the Holy See and Catholicism, and achieving diplomatic normalization with Beijing are likely to be protracted challenges for the Catholic Church. As stated in February 2008 by a high-ranking prelate speaking on condition of anonymity, probably conditions are "not yet ripe"<sup>114</sup> for the establishment of diplomatic ties between the Holy See and the PRC. Thus, building a sound and enduring relationship with China will require a great deal of Christian optimism and patience from the Apostolic See. Patience, however, is an inexhaustible resource in the Vatican. As Cardinal Agostino Casaroli, the principal architect of the Pontifical *Ostpolitik*,<sup>115</sup> once said, "China's patience lasts a thousand years, but the Church's patience is eternal."<sup>116</sup>

### *Conclusion*

This chapter concludes the analysis of the complex and difficult relations between the Holy See and the PRC. It examined two models that the Chinese government could follow in order to attain diplomatic normalization with the Apostolic See. The analysis advanced and subsequently dismissed the objection that the cultural, political and institutional dissimilarities between China and the Soviet Union/Russia would preclude the applicability of the Russian Model to China,

---

<sup>113</sup> Ibidem

<sup>114</sup> Anonymous high-ranking prelate as quoted in *China Post*, "Conditions not 'ripe' for Vatican to renew ties with Beijing: prelate", 22 February 2008, p. 1.

<sup>115</sup> Agostino Casaroli, *The Martyrdom of Patience. The Holy See and the Communist Countries (1963-89)*, Toronto, Ave Maria Centre of Peace, 2007.

<sup>116</sup> Cardinal Agostino Casaroli was John Paul II's Secretary of State from July 1979 to December 1990. This quotation of Cardinal Casaroli was related to me by Dr Peter Chiang, a journalist at Vatican Radio and a scholar who has a profound knowledge of the history of Holy See-China relations. Dr Chiang gave me his consent to be mentioned as a source in this thesis.

pointing out that this model has been productively adopted by Vietnam, the 'dragon in miniature'. After examining the significant but not radical differences between the two dragons' religious policies and *Vatikanpolitik*, the analysis identified the Chinese leaders' perception of Catholicism, rooted in China's Imperial and Maoist past, as the main cause of China's reluctance to shift from diplomatic contacts and symbolic gestures to formal negotiations. Therefore, the chapter, though not underestimating the positive effects of regular diplomatic interaction between the Apostolic Palace and Beijing, suggested that the Holy See should implement confidence building measures. In particular, Rome should intensify its cultural engagement with China and inaugurate cooperation projects in the PRC. These measures are necessary to promote a new understanding of Catholicism among the Communist apparatus. Indeed, because of the factional dynamics in the Party, only a generalized change of mind-set within the CPC might eventually permit the establishment of relations between the two 'heavenly powers'. When the Chinese government begins to see the Catholic Church as a partner for social progress, when Communist leaders begin to see religious freedom - for Catholics and non-Catholics - as an opportunity rather than a danger for the country, only then may relations be really normalized.

## - *Conclusions* -

This thesis has investigated the relations between the Holy See and the PRC, devoting particular attention to the Holy See's diplomatic effort toward China. Sino-Pontifical relations are one of the most intricate diplomatic conundrums on the world scene today. As this thesis has argued, numerous factors and variables contribute to the complexity of the Sino-Pontifical equation. In order to single out and analyze each of these factors and variables, this study addressed the following questions:

*Why have the Holy See and China been unable to establish diplomatic relations?  
How can the Holy See, which claims universal spiritual authority and upholds the Church's independence from secular influence, achieve diplomatic normalization with the Government of the PRC, which asserts its absolute sovereignty and aims at institutional and ideological control over the religious sectors of Chinese society?*

In order to answer these questions, this thesis started by identifying the factors that hindered - and continue to hinder - the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Apostolic See and Beijing.

On the Chinese side, these factors are:

- 1) The persistence of culturally entrenched religious policy models.
- 2) The persistence of ideological biases about religion within the Party.

- 3) The existence of lingering prejudices about Catholicism.
- 4) The Communist leadership's fear that a non-state-controlled Catholic Church could favour the emergence of civil society spaces and organizations.
- 5) Important domestic and foreign policy decisions require a wide cross-factional consensus within the CPC.

To reprise each of these points briefly:

1) *The persistence of culturally entrenched religious policy models.* Traditionally, Chinese rulers upheld the principle of the superiority of the state over religion, and strove to 'domesticate' religion and use it as an *instrumentum regni*. This idea of "tolerating religion and making the best use of it"<sup>1</sup> informs the religious policy of today's Communist China. The Chinese government recognizes only five religions toward which it implements a policy of limited tolerance. The freedom the government accords to religious believers is conditional not only on obedience to the state's law, but also on compliance with the CPC's ideological vision. This is the rationale for putting the five authorized confessions under the control of patriotic associations. This religious policy - which combines the principles of nationalism and allegiance to Socialism - is at odds with the Catholic Church's determination to be institutionally and doctrinally independent from secular influence, as a whole and in every country. The resulting Church-State conflict poses a massive obstacle to the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Holy See and Beijing.

---

<sup>1</sup> Kim-Kwong Chan, "Religion in China in the Twenty-First Century: Some Scenarios", p. 90.

2) *The persistence of ideological biases about religion within the CPC.* The CPC adheres to the Marxist doctrine of historical materialism. As illustrated in Chapter VI, this theory assumes that religion characterizes the pre-Socialist phase of social development and that it will eventually vanish with the edification of the Communist society. Eradication of religion, therefore, is one of the long-term objectives of the Chinese Communist leadership, which endorses the Marxist view of religion as the ‘opiate of the masses’. Accordingly, Party members are not allowed to believe in or to participate in a religion, and the PRC Constitution recognizes only the freedom of religious belief. The freedom of religious practice, instead, is limited by a close-knit net of legal restraints, which are aimed at transforming religious groups into social forces that the government uses for its political objectives. This idea of using religion instrumentally and gradually eradicating it is in sharp contrast with the Holy See’s firm defence of religious freedom and with the very confessional nature of the Roman Catholic Church. Therefore, the CPC’s notion of religion represents a big hurdle on the road to Sino-Pontifical diplomatic normalization.

3) *The existence of lingering prejudices about Catholicism.* Chinese official historiography depicts the Roman Catholic Church as an accomplice of Western colonialism in China during the ‘century of shame’. In other terms, it describes Catholicism as a foreign religion which “came in through the power of the cannon.”<sup>2</sup> This view is reasserted in numerous government documents on religion. In addition, the CPC’s officialdom tends to regard the Catholic Church as a foreign ‘counter-revolutionary’ force which plots to Westernize and split China. The Holy See’s involvement in the cross-Strait controversy is brought as a proof of the

---

<sup>2</sup> Pan Yue, “On Advancing the Marxist viewpoint on Religion over time”, in Roger Etchegaray, *Verso i cristiani in Cina, visti da una rana dal fondo di un pozzo*, p. 84.

Church's hostility to the PRC. Even the Pope's dual-hatted position, that of religious leader and the sovereign of the VCS, is used to corroborate the negative outlook on the Church. According to CPC ideologues, Catholicism is not headed by a religious figure, but by a foreign monarch. This would contravene the PRC constitution, which states that "Religious bodies and religious affairs are not subject to any foreign domination."<sup>3</sup> It is thus evident that the Chinese anti-Catholic prejudice greatly hinders progress in achieving formal Holy See-PRC relations.

4) *The Communist leadership's fear that a non-state-controlled Catholic Church could favour the emergence of civil society spaces and organizations.* One of the CPC's major fear is losing its monopoly of political power and its firm grip on Chinese society. Such a fear is amplified by the Party's ideological hollowness. For this reason, the government, while allowing (some) civil society associations to form, strictly limits their freedom and controls them closely. However, the government believes that the Catholic Church has a special potential to pose a threat to the CPC's political monopoly. The Catholic Church, in fact, orders its life and ministry according to its own rules, creating autonomous spaces of conviction and action that are not subjected to civil jurisdiction. These spaces could be used by forces willing to challenge the CPC's political and social supremacy. In the eyes of the Chinese leadership, this potential to promote pluralistic political beliefs through religion, is a reason for particular concern. The government, therefore, makes great efforts to impose its exclusive control over the Catholic Church in China. As a result, the CPC's relentless pursuit of 'Catholicism with Chinese characteristics' substantially impedes the rapprochement between Beijing and the Apostolic See.

---

<sup>3</sup> *Constitution of the People's Republic of China*, 4 December 1982, Article 36.

5) *Important domestic and foreign policy decisions require a wide cross-factional consensus within the CPC.* Today's factional dynamics within the CPC, being characterized by shared leadership and multi-actor consensus, greatly condition the government's policymaking. Unlike his predecessors, President Hu Jintao does not hold a position of absolute dominance over the CPC. Thus, Hu needs the support of other faction-leaders to govern. When Hu and his allies are faced with important domestic and foreign policies options, they must seek the consensus of the Party's major factions. Given that Sino-Pontifical relations are one of the most problematic issues on the agenda of the Chinese government, Hu cannot make a decision on this matter without having obtained a wide cross-factional consensus. Failing this, hostile factions might challenge the current leaders by accusing them of ideological deviationism and diplomatic adventurism. For this reason, Chinese rulers are over-cautious on the 'Vatican issue', and prefer to entrench themselves behind the two preconditions for relations with the Holy See. This policy of drift and procrastination only prolongs the diplomatic impasse between Beijing and the Apostolic Palace.

As for the Apostolic See, the factors impeding diplomatic normalization with Beijing are:

- 1) The institutional and doctrinal structure of the Catholic Church.
- 2) The Holy See's role as 'moral power'.
- 3) The factional divide on the diplomatic approach to the PRC.

Again, to reprise some of the detail of each of these points briefly:

1) *The institutional and doctrinal structure of the Catholic Church.* The Catholic Church's point of strength is its union of organization and ideology. In the eyes of Catholic teaching, the Church can remain truly 'universal' as long as its faithful openly profess ecclesiastical unity and loyalty to the institution and its leaders assert and defend its institutional and doctrinal integrity. This implies that the shepherds of the Church regard their loyalty to the spiritual and institutional unity of Catholicism as a duty dictated by their faith. Therefore, when the Roman Pontiff or the bishops face a choice between what they deem as the doctrinal and institutional unity of the Church and political or diplomatic objectives, they are supposed to decide for the former. For this reason, the Holy See utterly rejects the Chinese government's claim to institutional control over the Church in China, as well as its pretence to adapt the Catholic doctrine to the Communist patriotic orthodoxy. For the Holy See, bending to Beijing's demands would equate to renouncing its 'universality'. In sum, the rigidity of the institutional and doctrinal structure of the Church substantially limits the room for manoeuvre in Sino-Pontifical diplomatic interaction.

2) *The Holy See's role as 'moral power'.* The Holy See's nature as a non-state 'moral power' has weighty implications for its relations with the PRC. The Holy See is a sovereign religious force which attempts to implement a moral diplomacy. Thus, according to the Pontifical diplomats, while the state actors' foreign policy essentially consists of the defence and expansion of power, the Apostolic See's 'national interest' coincides with evangelization and the defence of human rights. In substance, this means that the Holy See founds its claim to moral eminence in the international community on its rejection of *realpolitik* logics and practices. Consequently, the moral prestige of the Holy See would be gravely undermined



should the Apostolic Palace shift recognition from Taipei to Beijing for manifestly realpolitik considerations. While Taiwan assures religious freedom for Catholics, the PRC, in many respects, does not. Therefore, the Holy See could hardly justify its change of allegiance in terms of other than realist reasons unless China makes some significant concessions on religious freedom. Then, the Holy See's status as moral power represents a considerable restraint on its freedom of diplomatic action toward China.

3) *The factional divide on the diplomatic approach to the PRC.* The rivalry between two factions that strive to shape the Church's *Sinopolitik* is another factor hindering the Holy See's diplomatic initiatives toward the PRC. One faction is leaning to somehow compromise the Church's principles for the sake of diplomatic ties with China, the other stands firm in the defence of such principles. In Chapter V, the two factions are referred to as Party of Compromise and Party of Principles. The factional strife, which has a strong mediatic echo and is often carried on through the media, undermines the prestige of the Church and weakens the Holy See's position vis-à-vis the Chinese government. In fact, the antagonism and mutual sabotage between the two groups impede the Holy See to fully exploiting diplomatic opportunities and adopting a unitary political-diplomatic line toward Beijing. Moreover, the factional divide within the Church is astutely exploited by those sectors of the Party-State apparatus, first and foremost the CPCA, which oppose the establishment of formal relations with the Apostolic See. These forces vocally criticize the Party of Principles' stance, claiming it to be the proof that the Catholic Church is an imperialist actor aiming at subverting China's political order. At the same time, they praise the Party of Compromise in order to widen the rift between it and its rival faction.

The negative feed-back of all these factors caused - and continues - the diplomatic impasse between the Apostolic See and China. However, unlike in the past, today within the Catholic Church and the Chinese apparatus there are some elements that might foster the positive evolution of Holy See-PRC relations pursued by the Pope's diplomats. These new elements include:

- 1) The presence of China experts in the Roman Curia and in the Catholic hierarchy.
- 2) The institution of the Commission For China and the issuing of Benedict XVI's letter to Chinese Catholics.
- 3) The progress toward unity of the Catholic Church in China.
- 4) The CPC intelligentsia's new approach to Church-State relations.
- 5) China's ambitions as a responsible stakeholder in the global system.

Each of these five factors adds a new possibility for breaking the long-running imbroglio between Beijing and Rome.

The presence of China experts in the Roman Curia and in the Catholic hierarchy has brought a new level of appreciation to policy-making regarding relations with the PRC to Rome. The turnover of key personnel decided by Benedict XVI has brought to Rome and elevated to prominent positions in the Catholic hierarchy figures with a robust China background who share the Pope's vision for relations with China. The Roman Pontiff has entrusted dialogue with the PRC to ecclesiastics who have a profound knowledge of the Church in China and are familiar with Chinese diplomacy. The most relevant of these figures is certainly Cardinal Joseph Zen Ze-kium, the Bishop of Hong Kong, who stands out both for

his fine understanding of Chinese politics and his firm defence of human rights and *libertas Ecclesiae*. Of great importance is also the appointment of Monsignor Fernando Filoni as Substitute of the Secretariat of State for the First Section of General Affairs. Filoni, over the 1990s, acted as John Paul II's envoy to the Church in China, reconciling the large majority of the 'official' bishops with the Roman Pontiff. The Holy See's *Sinopolitik* will undoubtedly benefit also from the continuing presence in the Roman Curia of Archbishop Claudio Maria Celli, whose involvement in Chinese affairs has unremittingly continued for three decades. In addition, the Pope's choice of Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone as Secretary of State ensures the prompt implementation of the Papal China policy, having Bertone a long experience as collaborator of Joseph Ratzinger.

The institution of the Commission for China and the issuing of Benedict XVI's letter to Chinese Catholics were practical measures for a rapprochement by the new Pope. In January 2007, Benedict XVI, after a top-level meeting on China held in the VCS, decided to establish the Commission for China. This body, the official purpose of which is to study the most important questions regarding the life of the Church in China, has the task of promoting synergy between the Roman Curia and those ecclesiastics and experts who are involved in relations with the PRC. Its first assembly, chaired by Cardinal Bertone, was summoned in the VCS in March 2008. The focus of the meeting was on the reactions, both inside and outside China, to the Pentecost 2007 Papal letter to Chinese Catholics. This document presented in clear terms the nature of the Catholic Church and the aims of its mission in China. For its scope and depth, the letter represents a watershed between the past and the future of Holy See-China relations. The Papal message, in fact, set the Church's doctrinal, diplomatic and political line towards China and laid the cornerstone of the bridge

that Benedict XVI intends to build between Rome and Beijing. Both the Papal letter and the institution of the Commission for China, then, opened new perspectives for progress in Sino-Pontifical interaction and are gestures the Chinese government cannot ignore.

The continuing progress toward unity of the Catholic Church in China shows that the Chinese government's efforts to set up a Church independent of the Holy See in the last half century have failed. Today, the vast majority of China's bishops are reconciled with Rome and are in communion with the Holy Father. Moreover, notwithstanding state repression, the numbers of Catholics in China have grown constantly. Although the clerical leadership in China is still old, a young element is being gradually added. Notably, the publication of the Papal letter provided Chinese clergy, both 'official' and 'underground', with a platform for unity and common action. Church leaders in China can be united on the basis of this letter and, starting from the letter, they can try to start a direct dialogue with the country's top civil authorities, stepping beyond bureaucratic bodies like the CPCA and the SARA. In sum, its regained unity has made the Catholic Church in China a stronger force. This makes the CPCA less and less capable of guaranteeing the political and ideological control of the state-sanctioned Church. For this reason, it is possible that Chinese leaders might, in the future, reach to the conclusion that the CPCA has become obsolete and order its disbandment for the sake of diplomatic relations with the Holy See. This decision would greatly help Sino-Pontifical diplomatic normalization.

The CPC intelligentsia's new approach to Church-State relations reflects the pragmatism of the new generation of Party leaders and intellectuals. This study

highlighted that a factor that is likely to play a positive role in progressing Sino-Pontifical relations is the ongoing (and controlled) process of generational change and elite cooptation within the Party apparatus. In order to manage the epochal changes the country is undergoing, the CPC is recruiting 'young blood' into its ranks. The members of the new leadership and intelligentsia - having generally travelled and, often, studied overseas - are likely to have a worldly and pragmatic mentality and a lay but not secularist outlook on religion. Their mind-set, thus, might lead them to take a stance that is not prejudicially hostile to religion and consider the warming of relations with the Holy See an opportunity rather than a danger. Actually, the utilitarian idea that religion is one of the socio-cultural instruments that the Party can use to obtain consensus and foster its political agenda already informs the religious policy of the Party-State. The further step that the new CPC intelligentsia could take is acknowledging that religion has, in itself, "psychological, cultural and moral functions, as well as numerous uses, such as services and public welfare."<sup>4</sup> On these grounds, they could advance the idea that it is in the CPC's interest to abandon the policy of suppressing and controlling religion and find a comprehensive settlement with religious formations, including the Catholic Church.

China's ambitions as a responsible stakeholder in the global system reverberates even on its *Vatikanpolitik*. China has become a pivotal actor in the world economy and now aspires to major power status in a future multipolar international system. China's ambitions pose a challenge to the American global leadership and geopolitics in the Asia-Pacific region. Thus, the United States has taken specific measures in order to counter the PRC's global and regional rise and maintain the

---

<sup>4</sup> Pan Yue as quoted in Pitman B. Potter, "Belief in Control: Regulation of Religion in China" p. 323.

quasi-unipolarity of the present international order. These measures include criticism of China's bad human rights record. American governmental and private bodies vocally complain about violations of human rights with the aim of proving that China cannot be a responsible stakeholder of the international community. Given the Holy See's unquestioned role as advocate of human rights and religious freedom, a warmer relationship between the PRC and the Apostolic Palace would substantially contribute to improve China's international image and help Beijing to present itself as a reliable stakeholder in the Asian and global system.

Having assessed the relationship over the years and looked at options for resolving the impasse, this study suggested that two lines of development could be jointly adopted and implemented by the parties in order to promote dialogue and cooperation between them and, eventually, establish diplomatic relations. These two initiatives are:

- 1) Consideration of the lessons of diplomatic normalization between a Communist state and the Catholic Church elsewhere.
- 2) Implementation of confidence building initiatives.

This study argued that, in order to achieve formal relations, the Holy See and Beijing should give consideration to following lessons from two models of diplomatic normalization between a Communist state and the supreme government of the Catholic Church: the Soviet/Russian and the Vietnamese models. In their first phase, these models are characterized by the intensification of diplomatic contacts between the Holy See and the Communist state. On the one hand, Pontifical delegations regularly visit the Communist country, where they meet the

local ecclesiastic authorities and hold high-level talks with the civil authorities. At the same time, the representatives of the Communist state regularly visit the VCS. These meetings lead to the top state leader visiting the Roman Pontiff. On the occasion of such a visit, the Holy See and the Communist government agree to start the process of entering into diplomatic relations. During his meeting with the Pope, the Communist head of state/government might even invite the Successor of Peter to his country. On the domestic side, the Communist state progressively relaxes its control over ecclesial life and institutions and change its legislation in order to respect the religious freedom of its citizens. Notably, this reform eliminates the main domestic obstacle to the establishment of diplomatic ties with the Holy See.

This thesis contended that the implementation of confidence building initiatives is essential to foster Sino-Pontifical diplomatic normalization. For this reason, it suggested that the Holy See and China should undertake confidence building measures, especially welfare and cultural exchange projects, aimed at furthering a new perception of Catholicism among the Chinese Communist apparatus. In particular, the parties should follow a conflict fractioning logic. According to this approach, in order to promote dialogue and mutual knowledge it is necessary to start with cooperation in low-conflict areas. By collaborating in these ambits, the parties would experience constructive resolution and forge mutual trust. With time, it would then become possible for them to work on the most problematic and thorny aspects of Holy See-China relations. This study highlighted that Rome appears determined to follow this strategy in order to create the confidence atmosphere needed for progressing toward Sino-Pontifical rapprochement. Since the 1990s, many Western Catholic charities and missionaries have increasingly operated within China, proving the benefits of non-secular actors' involvement in

addressing the PRC's social issues. A further contribution might be given by religious orders devoted to the alleviation of poverty, if they will be authorized to settle in China. Even academic exchanges and cultural projects can play an important role in the confidence building process. The combined effect of these initiatives in the social and cultural spheres would most likely be to significantly ease the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Apostolic See and China.

*In fine*, there is another important element that should be taken into account because it could, in the medium-long term, greatly favour Holy See-China rapprochement and diplomatic normalization. The two 'heavenly powers' have an important behavioural characteristic in common: they both follow a similar, if not identical, pattern in order to promote internal change and adapt themselves to new situations. Over the centuries, the Catholic Church has enacted great changes in its 'ideology' (theology) by presenting them as expressions of an immutable creed and, starting from them, it has issued new rules and directives which radically transformed its life. Similarly, the CPC, while reaffirming its total adherence to Marxism, has constantly renovated its theoretical edifice.<sup>5</sup> This ability to make ideological orthodoxy ductile has allowed radical changes in China's socio-economic organization as well as in Chinese foreign policy. Indeed, flexibility in tradition is the very engine of change both in the Catholic Church and the CPC. The two parties could use their mastery of the art of 'changing without changing' to reach a mutually advantageous agreement. Verily, infinite are the ways of the Church and, in truth, there are great possibilities under heaven!

---

<sup>5</sup> Francesco Sisci and Francesco Strazzari, *Santa Sede - Cina: l'incomprensione antica, l'interrogativo presente*, Bologna, Centro Editoriale Dehoniano, 2008, pp. 114-115.



## **- References -**

*30Days*. "A hope for China", October 2006,

<http://www.30giorni.it/us/brevi.asp?id=297>. Accessed 23 February 2007.

*30Days*. "New Russian representative to the Holy See", October 2005,

<http://www.30giorni.it/us/brevi.asp?id=226>. Accessed 29 December 2007

*30Days*. "The Orthodox Encyclopedia presented in Rome", May 2004,

[www.30giorni.it/us/brevi.asp?id=122](http://www.30giorni.it/us/brevi.asp?id=122). Accessed 22 December 2007

Aid to the Church in Need. *Synthesis Report 2006 on Religious Freedom in the world*, 2007.

*Age*. "Malawi dumps Taiwan for China", 15 January 2008,

<http://www.theage.com.au/news/world/malawi-dumps-taiwan-for-china/2008/01/15/1200159447309.html>. Accessed 20 January 2008.

*Africa Research Bulletin*, "Malawi-China-Taiwan: Aid Promise", Vol. 44, No 12, February 2008, pp. 157-176.

AFP. "China dismisses US bill backing UN membership for Taiwan", 13 November 2007,  
[http://afp.google.com/article/ALeqM5iX9Sfsy2sJ\\_iRqWLTvc6Iqw5eXEA](http://afp.google.com/article/ALeqM5iX9Sfsy2sJ_iRqWLTvc6Iqw5eXEA).  
Accessed 7 January 2008.

Alberigo, Giuseppe. "The Local Church in the West", *Heythrop Journal*, Vol. 28, No. 2, April 1987, pp. 125-143.

Allen, John. "The uphill journey of Catholicism in China", *National Catholic Reporter*, 2 August 2007, <http://missional.info/2007/08/04/the-uphill-journey-of-catholicism-in-china>. Accessed 15 August 2007.

Allen, John. "China, Taiwan and the Vatican", *National Catholic Reporter*, 25 November 2005, <http://www.nationalcatholicreporter.org/word/word112505.htm>.  
Accessed 23 March 2007.

Allen, John. "Interview with Cardinal Attilio Nicora, President of the Administration of the Patrimony of the Holy See", *National Catholic Reporter*, 6 February 2004, <http://ncronline.org/mainpage/specialdocuments/nicora.htm>.  
Accessed 25 February 2007.

Allen, John. "New Chinese saints raise old animosities", *National Catholic Reporter*, 13 October 2000,  
[http://www.natcath.com/NCR\\_Online/archives/101300/101300d.htm](http://www.natcath.com/NCR_Online/archives/101300/101300d.htm). Accessed 14 February 2007.

Alston, Cyprian. "Way of the Cross", in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. XV, New York, Robert Appleton Company, 1912,

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15569a.htm>. Accessed 26 March 2008

Anand, Dibyesh. "Tibet, China and the West: Empires of the Mind", *Open Democracy*, 2 April 2008,

[http://www.opendemocracy.net/article/china/globalisation/tibet\\_china\\_clash](http://www.opendemocracy.net/article/china/globalisation/tibet_china_clash).

Accessed 15 April 2008.

Anstead, Nick. "China Road: A Journey into the Future of a Rising Power by Rob Gifford", *Nick Anstead Weblog*, 25 July 2007,

<http://www.nickanstead.com/blog/?p=425>. Accessed 18 October 2007.

Apostolic Nunciature to China. *In Celebration of the 60 Years of ROC/Holy See Diplomatic Relations*, Taipei, 2002.

*Asia-Pacific News*, "China ordains bishop with Vatican approval eases tension", 7 May 2006,

[http://news.monstersandcritics.com/asiapacific/news/printer\\_1161942.php](http://news.monstersandcritics.com/asiapacific/news/printer_1161942.php).

Accessed on 20 June 2007.

*AsiaNews.it*. "Religious freedom is 'irrepressible, inalienable and inviolable,' says Pope", 21 September 2007, <http://www.asianews.it/index.php?l=en&art=10367>.

Accessed 24 September 2007.

*AsiaNews.it*. "Priests arrested and put into solitary confinement: the government's answer to the Pope's Letter", 2 August 2007,  
<http://www.asianews.it/index.php?l=en&art=9995&size=A>. Accessed 3 August 2007.

*AsiaNews.it*. "Liu Bainian goes back on his invitation to Pope, and the government talks of 'changing times'", 26 July 2007,  
<http://www.asianews.it/index.php?l=en&art=9931&theme=2&size=A>. Accessed 27 July 2007.

*AsiaNews.it*. "The new Bishop of Beijing is elected", 18 July 2007,  
<http://www.asianews.it/index.php?l=en&art=9856&size=A>. Accessed 19 July 2007.

*AsiaNews.it*. "China needs the Catholic Church, says Taiwan's Ambassador Tou", 5 July 2007, [www.asianews.it/index.php?l=en&art=9744](http://www.asianews.it/index.php?l=en&art=9744). Accessed 9 July 2007.

*AsiaNews.it*. "Beijing removes Papal letter to Chinese Church", 3 July 2007,  
<http://www.asianews.it/index.php?l=en&art=9711>. 4 July 2007.

*AsiaNews.it*. "Msgr. Fernando Filoni is the new substitute for the Secretary of State", 6 June 2007, <http://www.asianews.it/index.php?l=en&art=9507&size=A>. Accessed 11 June 2007.

*AsiaNews.it*. "Church endures economic persecution as the Patriotic Association tries to seize Church property", 9 March 2007,  
<http://www.asianews.it/index.php?l=en&art=7097#>. Accessed 21 March 2007.

*AsiaNews.it*. "Card. Zen: "No openings for religious freedom in China", 8 January 2007,

<http://www.asianews.it/index.php?l=en&art=8174&geo=6&theme=2&size=A>.

Accessed 20 January 2007.

*AsiaNews.it*. "Card. Zen: 'Beijing should learn from Vietnam and be open to religious freedom'", 6 December 2006,

[www.asianews.it/index.php?l=en&art=7935](http://www.asianews.it/index.php?l=en&art=7935). Accessed 8 June 2007.

*AsiaNews.it*. "Card. Zen: Il governo ha chiesto all'Associazione Patriottica di bloccare le ordinazioni illecite", 1 June 2006,

<http://www.asianews.it/index.php?l=it&art=6326>. Accessed 26 February 2007.

*AsiaNews.it*. "Bishop approved by Pope to be ordained tomorrow in Shenyang", 6 May 2006, <http://www.asianews.it/index.php?l=en&art=6096&dos=71&size=A>.

Accessed 20 June 2007

*AsiaNews.it*. "Card. Zen: My red hat for the blood and tears of the Church in China", 26 March 2006, <http://www.asianews.it/index.php?l=en&art=5740>.

Accessed 10 March 2007.

*AsiaNews.it*. "The problem with Beijing is religious freedom, says Cardinal Sodano", 26 October 2005, <http://www.asianews.it/view.php?l=en&art=4452>.

Accessed 20 February 2007.

*AsiaNews.it*. "Taiwanese President, Chen Shui-bian, to attend the Pope's funeral", 6 April 2005, <http://www.asianews.it/index.php?l=en&art=2973>. Accessed 20 March 2007.

*AsiaNews.it*. "The Russian Orthodox Church seek Beijing's official recognition", 28 June 2004, <http://www.asianews.it/view.php?l=en&art=1052>. Accessed 18 March 2007.

*Asian Political News*. "H.K. Cardinal says Vietnam-Vatican ties a good model for China", 5 February 2007, [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m0WDQ/is\\_2007\\_Feb\\_5/ai\\_n17168058/pg\\_1](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0WDQ/is_2007_Feb_5/ai_n17168058/pg_1). Accessed 18 October 2007.

Australian Catholic University, "Glossary", <http://dlibrary.acu.edu.au/research/theology/theo305/glossary.htm>. Accessed 1 March 2007.

*Avvenire*. "Roma-Pechino, un pressante bisogno di comunicare", 24 May 2005, p. 13.

Barry, Peter. "A Commentary on the Letter of Pope Benedict XVI to the Catholics of China", *Holy Spirit Study Centre*, 4 July 2007, [www.hsstudyc.org.hk/en/remarks/en\\_err\\_20070704.html](http://www.hsstudyc.org.hk/en/remarks/en_err_20070704.html). Accessed 10 July 2007.

Bathon, Matthew N. "The Atypical International Status of the Holy See", *Vanderbilt Journal of Transnational Law*, Vol. 34, May 2001, pp. 598-641.

Beaulac, Stephane. "The Westphalian Model in Defining International Law: Challenging the Myth", *Australian Journal of Legal History*, Vol. 8, No. 2, 2004, pp. 181-213.

Benedict XVI. *Letter of the Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI to the Bishops, Priest, Consecrated Persons and Lay Faithful of the Catholic Church in the People's Republic of China*, 27 May 2007,  
[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/letters/2007/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_let\\_20070527\\_china\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/letters/2007/documents/hf_ben-xvi_let_20070527_china_en.html). Accessed 2 July 2007.

BBC. "Chinese reformer Zhao Ziyang dies", 17 January 2005,  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/4177135.stm>. Accessed 5 February 2008.

Billington, Michael. "Matteo Ricci, the Grand Design, and the Disaster of the 'Rites Controversy'", *Executive Intelligence Review*, Vol. 28, No. 43, 9 November 2001, [http://www.new-fed.com/other/2001/2843m\\_ricci.html#fn1](http://www.new-fed.com/other/2001/2843m_ricci.html#fn1). Accessed 24 January 2007.

Blasi, Anthony J. and Weigert, Andrew J. "Towards a Sociology of Religion: An Interpretative Sociology Approach", *Sociological Analysis*, Vol. 37, No. 3, Autumn, 1976, pp. 189-204.

Bock, Alan. "Considering Sovereignty", *Antiwar.com*, 11 April 2001,  
<http://www.antiwar.com/bock/pf/p-b041101.html>. Accessed 19 January 2008.

Boldrin, Giulio. *La Santa Sede e le Organizzazioni Internazionali*, Trieste, Università di Trieste, 2001.

Bordonaro, Federico. "Asia's Dawning Multipolar System Increases Australia's Geopolitical Importance", *Power and Interest News Report*, 14 June 2006, [http://pinr.com/report.php?ac=view\\_report&report\\_id=509&language\\_id=1](http://pinr.com/report.php?ac=view_report&report_id=509&language_id=1). Accessed 1 November 2007.

*Boston Globe*. "Pope's envoy hails Putin meeting", 10 March 2007, [http://www.boston.com/news/world/europe/articles/2007/03/10/popes\\_envoy\\_hails\\_putin\\_meeting/](http://www.boston.com/news/world/europe/articles/2007/03/10/popes_envoy_hails_putin_meeting/). Accessed 3 January 2008.

Boudouris, Konstantine. *The Philosophy of Logos*, Athens, IAGP, 1996.

Bowring, Bill. "Moscow: Third Rome, Model Communist City, Eurasian Antagonist - and Power as No-Power?" in Andreas Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos, *Law and the City*, London, Routledge Cavendish, 2007, pp. 83-91.

Boyle, Terrence J. "Christianity in China between the Establishment of the Native Hierarchy in 1926 and the Communist Conquest of the Mainland in 1949", *Catholicism*, 15 October 2007, [http://www.tboyle.net/Catholicism/China\\_Hist\\_II.html](http://www.tboyle.net/Catholicism/China_Hist_II.html). Accessed 2 March 2007.



Bradsher, Keith. "Gentle Cleric's Stature Grows as He Risks Ire in China", *New York Times*, 8 July 2006,  
[http://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/08/world/asia/08zen.html?\\_r=1&oref=slogin](http://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/08/world/asia/08zen.html?_r=1&oref=slogin).  
Accessed 10 March 2007.

Campisi, Tiziana. "Il Cardinale Bertone: la diplomazia vaticana al servizio del vero bene dell'uomo", *Vatican Radio*, 23 February 2007,  
<http://www.radiovaticana.org/en1/Articolo.asp?c=119678>. Accessed 25 February 2007.

*Canale 5*, "Terra!", television interview to Fr Bernardo Cervellera, 23 March 2008.

Cardinale, Gianni. "Beijing is not the Only Absent", *30Days*, July 2006,  
<http://www.30giorni.it/us/articolo.asp?id=10813>. Accessed 1 March 2007.

Carman, Bill. "State Sovereignty", *International Development Research Centre*, 17 November 2004, [http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-28492-201-1-DO\\_TOPIC.html](http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-28492-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html).  
Accessed 20 March 2008.

*Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs - Books for Breakfast*, "Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics", 13 April 2004,  
<http://www.cceia.org/resources/transcripts/4466.html#1>. Accessed 8 June 2007.

Carosa, Alberto. "First the Power, then the Government", *Catholic World News*, 6 December 2001, <http://www.cwnews.com/news/viewstory.cfm?recnum=20794>.  
Accessed 4 March 2007.

Casanova, Jose. "Civil society and religion: retrospective reflections on Catholicism and prospective reflections on Islam", *Social Research*, Vol. 69, No. 4, Winter 2001, pp. 1041-1082.

Casaroli, Agostino. *The Martyrdom of Patience. The Holy See and the Communist Countries (1963-89)*, Toronto, Ave Maria Centre of Peace, 2007.

Castelfranco, Sabina. "Vatican, China Seek Closer Diplomatic Ties", *Voice of America*, 22 January 2008, <http://www.voanews.com/english/archive/2008-01/2008-01-22-voa34.cfm?CFID=277811054&CFTOKEN=46626151>. Accessed 26 January 2008.

*Catholic News*. "Hong Kong diocese issues revised version of Papal letter to China's Catholics", 6 August 2007, <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/new.php?n=10054>. Accessed 24 July 2007.

*Catholic News*. "Benedict's letter 'different': Chinese church leader", 3 July 2007, <http://www.cathnews.com/news/707/11.php>. Accessed 4 July 2007.

*Catholic News*. China church will continue to 'self-ordain' bishops without approval of pope, says gov't association leader, 5 July 2007, [http://www.catholic.org/international/international\\_story.php?id=24611](http://www.catholic.org/international/international_story.php?id=24611). Accessed 6 July 2007.

*Catholic News*. "Chinese Bishop abducted, escapes over illicit ordination", 1 December 2006, [www.cathnews.com/news/612/6.php](http://www.cathnews.com/news/612/6.php). Accessed 12 March 2007.

*Catholic Online*. "Cardinal Bertone's Meeting with the Press", 19 August 2007, <http://www.catholiconline.com/featured/headline.php?ID=4701>. Accessed 20 August 2007.

*Catholic Online*. "Gov't, church leaders laud Vatican-Vietnam meeting", 30 January 2007, [http://www.catholic.org/international/international\\_story.php?id=22865](http://www.catholic.org/international/international_story.php?id=22865). Accessed 13 September 2007.

*Catholic World Brief*. "Chinese Bishop Arrested: to Silence Pope's Message", 23 August 2007, <http://www.ewtn.com/vnews/getstory.asp?number=81588>. Accessed 26 August 2007.

*Catholic World News*, "Chinese Officials Confirm Talks with Vatican", 21 February 2008, <http://www.cwnews.com/news/viewstory.cfm?recnum=56762>. Accessed 5 March 2008.

*Catholic World News*. "Tensions within Vatican on China Diplomacy", 23 March 1999, <http://www.cwnews.com/news/viewstory.cfm?recnum=9898>. Accessed 15 January 2008.

*CBNnews*. "Hong Kong's Cardinal Zen on Freedom and Democracy, 5 June 2007, <http://www.cbn.com/CBNnews/189993.aspx>. Accessed 12 July 2007.

Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and State Council. *Document 6: Circular on some problems concerning further improving work on religion*, 5 February 1991.

Central Intelligence Agency. "Vietnam", *The World Factbook*, 20 March 2008, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/vm.html>. Accessed 31 March 2008.

Cervellera, Bernardo. "The Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association celebrates 50 years at a less than ideal moment", *AsiaNews.it*, 25 July 2007, <http://www.asianews.it/index.php?l=en&art=9915&theme=2&size=A>. Accessed 26 July 2007.

Cervellera, Bernardo. "Pope's letter: for truth and love of the Church and China", *AsiaNews.it*, 30 June 2007, June 2007, <http://www.asianews.it/index.php?l=en&art=9694>. Accessed 1 July 2007.

Cervellera, Bernardo. "Afraid of the Pope, China closes its doors", *AsiaNews.it*, 5 April 2005, <http://www.asianews.it/index.php?l=en&art=2962>. Accessed 19 March 2007.

Cervellera, Bernardo. *Missione Cina*, Ancora Editrice, Milano, 2003.

Chakraverti, Sauvik. "Hobbes' Mistake - The Rational Case for Anarchy", *Times of India*, 26 May 2001, pp. 15-16.

Chan, Gerald. "Sino-Vatican Diplomatic Relations: Problems and Prospects", *China Quarterly*, No. 120, December 1989, pp. 814-836.

Chan, Kim-Kwong. "Religion in China in the Twenty-First Century: Some Scenarios", *Religion, State and Society*, Vol. 33, No. 2, June 2005, pp. 87-119.

Chan, Kim-Kwong. "China Socioeconomic Change and the Implications for the Religion-State Dynamic in China", *Brigham Young University Law Review*, No. 2, 2004, pp. 325-356.

Chang, Yun-ping. "Top envoy says Vatican ready to relocate embassy", *Taipei Times*, 30 March 2006, p. 3.

Chang, Yun-ping. "MOFA urges the Vatican to be fair", *Taipei Times*, 24 November 2005, p. 2.

Chen, Melody. "Envoy to the Vatican reveals secret weapon", *Taipei Times*, 27 May 2005, p. 2.

Cheng, Jonathan. "Change mind-set, Zen urges Beijing", *The Standard*, 31 March 2006,  
[http://www.thestandard.com.hk/news\\_detail.asp?we\\_cat=4&art\\_id=15541&sid=7302565&con\\_type=1&d\\_str=20060331&fc=8#](http://www.thestandard.com.hk/news_detail.asp?we_cat=4&art_id=15541&sid=7302565&con_type=1&d_str=20060331&fc=8#). Accessed 26 October 2007.

*China Internet Information Center*. "Building a New Socialist Countryside",  
<http://www.china.org.cn/english/zhuanti/country/159776.htm>. Accessed 7 January  
2008.

*China Post*, "Conditions not 'ripe' for Vatican to renew ties with Beijing: prelate",  
22 February 2008, p. 1.

*China Report*. "White Paper: The One-China Principle and the Taiwan Issue", No.  
36, 2000, pp. 277-292.

Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. "Brief History of the Chinese  
People's Political Consultative Conference",  
[http://www.cppcc.gov.cn/English/brf\\_intro](http://www.cppcc.gov.cn/English/brf_intro). Accessed 19 February 2007.

Chinese Protestant Church. "A brief account of Christianity in China", *Chinese  
Protestant Church*, 2003,  
<http://www.chineseprotestantchurch.org.cn/en/about/abrief.htm>. Accessed 2 March  
2007.

Chinese Regional Bishops' Conference. "Chinese Regional Bishops' Conference",  
<http://www.catholic.org.tw/catholic/index.php>. Accessed 6 March 2007.

Ching, Frank. "Sino-Vatican Relations after Pope John Paul II", *China Brief*, Vol.  
5, No. 8, 12 April 2005, pp. 3-5,  
<http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China/GD12Ad05.html>. Accessed 20 March 2007.

Chong, Alan. "The Foreign Policy Potential Of 'Small State Soft Power' Information Strategies", conference paper, Sixth Pan-European Conference on International Relations, Turin, 12-15 September 2007.

Chung, Lawrence. "Vatican official vows to back Taipei links", *South China Morning Post*, 26 November 2005,  
<http://www.scmp.com/portal/site/SCMP/menuitem.06f0b401397a029733492d9253a0a0a0/?vgnextoid=b66961b086b21110VgnVCM100000360a0a0aRCRD&s=Archive>. Accessed 4 April 2007.

CINS. "Archbishop Joseph Ngo Quang Kiet of Hanoi confirms government concession", <http://www.vaticans.org/index.php?/categories/2-Asia-News>, 4 February 2008. Accessed 14 March 2008.

Cioppa, John A. "Preface", in Elmer Wurth and Betty Ann Maheu, *Papal Documents Related to China (1937-2005)*, Holy Spirit Study Centre, Hong Kong, 2006, pp. XIV-XVI.

Ciprotti, Pio. "Funzione, figura e valore della Santa Sede", *Concilium*, No. 8, 1970, pp. 79-90.

Clark, Eric. *Corps Diplomatique*, London, Allen Lane, 1973.

Coco, Giovanni. *Santa Sede e Manciuukò (1932-1945)*, Città del Vaticano, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2006.

Cody, Edward. "China Consecrates 2nd Bishop without Approval of the Pope", *Washington Post*, 4 May 2006, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/05/03/AR2006050300692.html>. Accessed 11 May 2007.

Coffele, Gianfranco. "Convenzione dell'UPS con tre università cinesi", 25 July 2007, *Pontificia Università Salesiana - News*, <http://www.ups.urbe.it/index.php?method=news&action=zoom&id=186>. Accessed 29 August 2007.

Collotti Pischel, Enrica. "Vietnam e Cambogia: i metodi tradizionali restano i più efficaci", *Asia Major*, 1999, <http://www.unipv.it/cspe/am995.htm#2>. Accessed 9 December 2007.

Collotti Pischel, Enrica. *Storia dell'Asia Orientale*, Roma, Carocci, 1998.

Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. "Doctrinal Note on some Aspects of Evangelisation", 14 December 2007, [http://212.77.1.245/news\\_services/bulletin/news/21315.php?index=21315&lang=it](http://212.77.1.245/news_services/bulletin/news/21315.php?index=21315&lang=it). Accessed 18 January 2007.

Convention on Rights and Duties of States. Montevideo, 26 December 1933, <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/intdip/interam/intam03.htm>. Accessed 25 February 2007.



Criveller, Gianni. *China's Government Policy toward the Catholic Church in the Contest of recent Developments*, conference paper, 7<sup>th</sup> European Catholic China Colloquium, Milan, 6-10 September 2006.

Criveller, Gianni. "The smoke screen of China's preconditions for relations with the Holy See", *AsiaNews.it*, 21 April 2005,  
<http://www.asianews.it/index.php?l=en&art=3108>. Accessed 26 January 2007.

Criveller, Gianni. "John Paul II and China", *Tripod*, Vol. No. 137, Summer 2005, pp. 5-30.

Cubeddu, Giovanni. "'Vatican' Resolution", *30Days*, July 2004,  
<http://www.30giorni.it/us/articolo.asp?id=4008>. Accessed 27 February 2007.

Cutler, Abigail. "A Church for China", *The Atlantic*, 5 June 2007,  
<http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200706u/catholic-china>. Accessed 16 June 2007.

Dabre, Thomas. "Inter-religious dialogue and evangelization can co-exist", *AsiaNews.it*, 12 January 2008,  
<http://new.asianews.it/index.php?l=en&art=11231&size=>. Accessed 20 January 2008.

Deely, John. "Semiotics and Jakob von Uexküll's concept of umwelt", *Sign Systems Studies*, Vol. 32.1/2, 2004, pp. 11-34.

D'Emilio, Frances. "Pope Presides at Good Friday Procession", *Associated Press*, 22 March 2008, <http://www.wtop.com/?nid=105&sid=1370252>. Accessed 23 March 2008.

Dong Gu, Ming. "Reconceptualizing the Linguistic Divide: Chinese and Western Theories of the Written Sign", *Comparative Literature Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 2, 2000, pp. 101-124.

D'Onorio, Joel Benoit. "Appointment of Bishops", in Philippe Levillain, *The Papacy: an Encyclopedia*, New York, Routledge, 2001, Vol. 1, pp. 85-90.

Eckholm, Erik. "In Bid to Court China, Pope Weighs Visit To Hong Kong", *New York Times*, 12 February 1999, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9504E4D8163AF931A25751C0A96F958260>. Accessed 2 May 2007.

*Economist*. "Papal Diplomacy. God's Ambassadors", 19 July 2007, [www.economist.com/world/international/displaystory.cfm?story\\_id=9516461](http://www.economist.com/world/international/displaystory.cfm?story_id=9516461). Accessed 24 July 2007.

*Ecumenical News International*. "Beijing snubs papal funeral, despite Pope's regrets on not visiting China", 7 April 2005, <http://www.eni.ch/highlights/news.shtml?2005/04>. Accessed 20 March 2007.

Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the United States of America.

"China congratulates Ratzinger as new pope (04/20/05)", 20 April 2005,

<http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/gyzg/t192447.htm>. Accessed 21 March 2007.

Etchegaray, Roger. *Verso I cristiani in Cina. Visti da una rana dal fondo di un pozzo*, Mondadori, Milano, 2005.

EWTN. "Benedict XVI Guarded on China Question", 25 July 2007,

[www.ewtn.com/vnews/getstory.asp?number=81047](http://www.ewtn.com/vnews/getstory.asp?number=81047). Accessed 1 August 2007.

EWTN. "China Letter a New Beginning, Says Aide", 10 July 2007,

[www.eternalworldtelevision.com/vnews/getstory\\_print.asp?number=80673](http://www.eternalworldtelevision.com/vnews/getstory_print.asp?number=80673).

Accessed 13 July 2007.

EWTN. "Cardinal Bertone: Diplomacy Serves Humanity, Holy See Doesn't Seek Its Own Interests", 28 February 2007,

<http://www.ewtn.com/vnews/getstory.asp?number=76355>. Accessed 13 March 2007.

F.K. "Governance in the Church", *New Blackfriars*, Vol. 81, No. 955, September 2000, pp. 306-308.

Fader, Hallie. "The Chinese Legal Tradition: A Three-part Discussion of the Chinese Legal tradition", *ORIAS - University of California*, July 2004,

[www.ias.berkeley.edu/orias/summer2004/summer2004Chinalegal.htm](http://www.ias.berkeley.edu/orias/summer2004/summer2004Chinalegal.htm). Accessed 12 September 2007.

Fagan, Geraldine. "New parliamentary force for 'traditional spiritual values'", *Forum 18 News Service*, 24 March 2003, [www.forum18.org/Archive.php?article\\_id=15&pdf=Y](http://www.forum18.org/Archive.php?article_id=15&pdf=Y). Accessed 29 December 2007.

Fazzini, Gerolamo (edited by). *Il libro rosso dei martiri cinesi. Testimonianze e resoconti autobiografici*, Edizioni San Paolo, Cinisello Balsamo (Italy), 2006.

Felicilda, Maxwell. "The Unhistorical Historian: A Careful Examination of Hegel's Philosophy of History", *Diwatao*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2001, [http://www.geocities.com/philodept/diwatao/philosophy\\_of\\_history.htm](http://www.geocities.com/philodept/diwatao/philosophy_of_history.htm). Accessed 18 September 2007.

Ferlito, Sergio. *L'attività internazionale della Santa Sede*, Milano, Giuffrè, 1988.

*Fides*. "The history of the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples", <http://www.fides.org/eng/congregazione/storia.html>. Accessed 22 March 2007.

Finocchiaro, Francesco. *Diritto Ecclesiastico*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1997.

Fisher, Roger J. "Fractioning Conflict", in *International Conflict and Behavioural Sciences: The Craigville Papers*. New York, Basic Books, 1964, pp. 91-109.

Fong, Ruey-jay. "Holy See offers new paradigm for Taiwan", *Taipei Times*, 05 July 2007, p. 8.

Fortescue, Adrian. "Latin Church", in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. IX, New York, Robert Appleton Company, 1910,  
<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09022a.htm>. Accessed 20 January 2008.

Fraze, Robert. "From special ed to finding water, Chinese church offers social help", *Catholic News Service*, 7 April 2005,  
<http://www.catholicnews.com/data/stories/cns/print/0701901.htm>. Accessed 25 October 2007.

Fu Jen Catholic University. "History", *Fu Jen Catholic University*, 2005,  
[http://www.fju.edu.tw/eng\\_fju/history.htm](http://www.fju.edu.tw/eng_fju/history.htm). Accessed 12 March 2007.

Gänswein, Georg. "Affectio Papalis", in Axel von Campenhausen, *Lexikon für Kirchen- und Staatskirchenrecht: Lexikon für Kirchen- und Staatskirchenrecht*, Vol. 1, Paderborn, Schöningh, 2002, pp. 36-37.

*Giga-Catholic Information*, "Catholic Church in Russian Federation", 2008,  
<http://www.gcatholic.com/dioceses/country/RU.htm>. Accessed 28 December 2007.

Gill, Bates. Huang, Chin-hao and J. Stephen Morrison. "Assessing China's Growing Influence in Africa", *China Security*, Vol. 3, No. 3 Summer 2007, pp. 3-21.

Giunipero, Elisa. "Matteo Ricci: per un dialogo tra China e Occidente", *Tuttocina*,  
[http://www.tuttocina.it/mondo\\_cinese/109/109\\_giun.htm](http://www.tuttocina.it/mondo_cinese/109/109_giun.htm). Accessed 6 September 2007.

Giunipero, Elisa. *Chiesa cattolica e Cina comunista. Dalla rivoluzione del 1949 al Concilio Vaticano II*, Brescia (Italy), Morcelliana, 2007.

Glatz, Carol. "Taiwan's ambassador to Vatican baptized a Catholic", *Catholic News Service*, 20 April 2006,  
<http://www.catholicnews.com/data/stories/cns/0602270.htm>. Accessed 16 January 2007.

*Global Catholic Network*. "The See of Peter - Secretariat of State", July 2007  
<http://www.ewtn.com/HolySee/Curia/Secretariat.asp>. Accessed 12 July 2007.

Goldman, Harvey. "Images of the others, Asia in Nineteenth Century Western Thought - Hegel, Marx and Weber", in Ainslie Thomas Embree and Carol Gluck, *Asia in Western and World History: a Guide for Teaching*, Armonk (United States), M. E. Sharpe, 1997, pp. 127-146.

Gorbachev, Mikhail. *Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World*, New York, Harper & Row Publishers, 1987.

GOV.cn. "State Administration for Religious Affairs", 2006,  
[http://english.gov.cn/2005-10/09/content\\_75331.htm](http://english.gov.cn/2005-10/09/content_75331.htm). Accessed 13 March 2007.

Grant, Ryan. "Mahony's China Sabbatical and What It May Mean", *Los Angeles Lay Catholic Mission*, December 2005,  
<http://www.losangelesmission.com/ed/articles/2005/0512rg.htm>. Accessed 9 March 2007.

Greenstein Altmann, Jennifer. "Communist ideology one cause of Soviet collapse", *Princeton Weekly Bulletin*, Vol. 91, No. 16, 18 February 2002, <http://www.princeton.edu/pr/pwb/02/0218/7a.shtml>. Accessed 10 February 2008.

Gutierrez, Alejandro Torres. "La financiación de la Iglesia Católica en España", *Revista Espanola de Derecho Canónico*, Vol. 59, No. 153, 2002, pp. 877-892.

Haberman, Clyde. "The Kremlin and the Vatican; Gorbachev Visits Pope at Vatican; Ties Are Forged", *New York Times*, 2 December 1989, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=950DEFDD173CF931A35751C1A96F948260&sec=&spon=&pagewanted=all>. Accessed 13 December 2007.

Haliczer, Stephen. "Papal Control Over the Appointment of Bishops", *Catholic Observer*, 15 May 2006, <http://catholicobserver.com/2006/05/15/papal-control-over-the-appointment-of-bishops.aspx>. Accessed 14 January 2008.

Hallet, Stephen. "One eye on China: Mind the Gap", *BBC*, 23 March 2006, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/ouch/closeup/china/230306.shtml>. Accessed 12 July 2007.

Hampson, Rick. "Pope Changed the World", *USA Today*, 3 April 2005, [http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2005-04-03-pope-legacy\\_x.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2005-04-03-pope-legacy_x.htm). Accessed 19 March 2007.

Hanson, Eric O. *The Catholic Church in World Politics*, Princeton (United States), Princeton University Press, 1987.

Harouel, Jean-Louis. "The Methods of Selecting Bishops Stipulated by Church-State Agreements in Force Today" in Peter Huizing and Knut Walf, *Electing Our Own Bishops*, New York, Seabury Press, 1980, pp. 60-68.

Hegel, Georg W. F. *The Philosophy of History*, Kitchener (Canada), Batoche Books, 2001.

Hercules, Nicholas J. "Holy See Diplomacy: a Study of Non-alignment in the post-World War Two era", *Catholic Culture*, 5 January 1999, <http://www.catholicculture.org/library/view.cfm?recnum=798>. Accessed 11 January 2007.

Heyndricks, Jeroom. "In Obedience to the Pope, not to Any Partner in Dialogue", *UCA News*, 20 July 2007, [http://www.ucanews.com/html/ucan/f\\_currentspecialdetail.asp?ucalang=English&sPath=news\\_report/english/2007/07/w3/fri/CH02968Cg.txt](http://www.ucanews.com/html/ucan/f_currentspecialdetail.asp?ucalang=English&sPath=news_report/english/2007/07/w3/fri/CH02968Cg.txt). Accessed 22 July 2007.

Heyndricks, Jeroom. "Pastoral directives of Pope Benedict XVI for China", *The Atlantic*, 12 July 2007, <http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200707u/pope-letter>. Accessed 20 July 2007.

Heyndricks, Jeroom. "The Beginning of a New Phase in the History of the Church in China", *UCA News*, 6 July 2007, [http://www.ucanews.com/html/ucan/f\\_currentspecialdetail.asp?ucalang=English&sPath=news\\_report/english/2007/07/w3/fri/CH02968Cg.txt](http://www.ucanews.com/html/ucan/f_currentspecialdetail.asp?ucalang=English&sPath=news_report/english/2007/07/w3/fri/CH02968Cg.txt). Accessed 22 July 2007.



Heyndricks, Jeroom. "No confrontation, but dialogue in truth!; A call from Pope Benedict XVI to the PRC and to all Chinese faithful", *UCA News*, 29 January 2007, [http://www.catholic.org/international/international\\_story.php?id=22847&page=2](http://www.catholic.org/international/international_story.php?id=22847&page=2). Accessed 23 February 2007.

Heyndricks, Jeroom. "An Olive Branch for China", *Tripod*, Vol. 21, No. 123, Winter 2001, pp. 66-71.

Heyndricks, Jeroom. "Why China Snubbed the Vatican", *The Tablet*, 15 January 2000, <http://www.thetablet.co.uk/articles/6523>. Accessed 6 March 2007.

Hobson, John M. "Explaining the Rise of the West: A Reply to Ricardo Duchesne", *Journal of the Historical Society*, December 2006, Vol. 6, No. 4, pp. 579-599.

Hoffmann, Hubertus. "The Pope and Beijing", *World Security Network*, 30 November 2005, [http://www.worldsecuritynetwork.com/dsp\\_proposal.cfm?proposal\\_id=209](http://www.worldsecuritynetwork.com/dsp_proposal.cfm?proposal_id=209). Accessed 16 April 2007.

Holy See. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, [http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc\\_css/archive/catechism/credo.htm](http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/credo.htm). Accessed 30 December 2007.

Holy See. *Code of Canon Law*, English translation, Washington DC, Canon Law Society of America, 1998,

[http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG1104/\\_INDEX.HTM](http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG1104/_INDEX.HTM). Accessed 12 February 2007.

Holy See. "Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith",

[http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_pro\\_14071997\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_pro_14071997_en.html). Accessed 3 March 2007.

Holy See. "The Secretariat of State",

[http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/secretariat\\_state/documents/rc\\_seg-st\\_12101998\\_profile\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/secretariat_state/documents/rc_seg-st_12101998_profile_en.html). Accessed 15 February 2007.

Holy See and Republic of Singapore, *25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations between the Republic of Singapore and the Holy See. 1981-2006*, Singapore, The Apostolic Nunciature in Singapore, 2006.

*Holy See News Services*. "Nomina del Sostituto per gli Affari Generali della Segreteria di Stato", 9 June 2007,

[http://212.77.1.245/news\\_services/bulletin/news/20370.php?index=20370&po\\_date=09.06.2007&lang=ge#NOMINA%20DEL%20SOSTITUTO%20PER%20GLI%20AFFARI%20GENERALI%20DELLA%20SEGRETERIA%20DI%20STATO](http://212.77.1.245/news_services/bulletin/news/20370.php?index=20370&po_date=09.06.2007&lang=ge#NOMINA%20DEL%20SOSTITUTO%20PER%20GLI%20AFFARI%20GENERALI%20DELLA%20SEGRETERIA%20DI%20STATO). Accessed 11 June 2007.

*Holy See News Services*. "Comunicato della Sala Stampa Vaticana della Santa Sede: Riunione sulla situazione della Chiesa Cattolica nella Cina Continentale - Traduzione in lingua inglese", 20 January 2007,  
[http://212.77.1.245/news\\_services/bulletin/news/19586.php?index=19586&po\\_date=20.01.2007&lang=it](http://212.77.1.245/news_services/bulletin/news/19586.php?index=19586&po_date=20.01.2007&lang=it). Accessed 22 January 2007.

*Holy See Press Office*. "Bilateral and Multilateral Relations of the Holy See", 31 May 2007,  
[http://www.vatican.va/news\\_services/press/documentazione/documents/corpo-diplomatico\\_index\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/news_services/press/documentazione/documents/corpo-diplomatico_index_en.html). Accessed 3 June 2007.

Holy Spirit Study Centre. "About us", *Holy Spirit Study Centre*, 2006,  
[http://www.hsstudyc.org.hk/en/en\\_intro.html](http://www.hsstudyc.org.hk/en/en_intro.html). Accessed 6 August 2007.

Hooker, Richard. "T'ien Ming - the Mandate of Heaven", *China Glossary - Washington State University*, 1996,  
<http://wsu.edu/~dee/GLOSSARY/TIENMING.HTM>. Accessed 22 June 2007.

Hornemann, Magda. "China's Catholics, the Holy See and religious freedom", *Forum 18 News Service*, 12 April 2007,  
[http://www.forum18.org/Archive.php?article\\_id=942](http://www.forum18.org/Archive.php?article_id=942). Accessed 6 May 2007.

House of Representatives of the United States of America, *U.S./China Relations and Human Rights: is Constructive Engagement Working?* Hearing Before the Subcommittee on International Relations and Human Rights of the Committee on International Relations of the House of Representatives, One Hundred Fifth Congress, First Session, 28 October 1997, p. 26.

Humphrey, John and Dirk Messner. "Unstable Multipolarity? China's and India's Challenges for Global Governance", *German Development Institute*, January 2006, pp. 1-5.

Ignatius of Antioch. *Epistle to the Smyrnaeans*, 110,  
<http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/srawley/smyrnaeans.html>. Accessed 13 January 2008.

*Independent Catholic News*, "Papal envoy comments on his visit to Russia", 31 October 2005, <http://www.indcatholicnews.com/envruss.html>. Accessed 28 December 2007.

*Inside the Vatican*. "Who are the Cardinals?", 2001,  
<http://www.catholiceducation.org/articles/religion/re0490.html>. Accessed 4 August 2008.

Institute of Catholic History of FuJen Catholic University. *A Collection of Documents on the History of the 60 Years of Sino-Vatican Diplomatic Relations*, Taipei, Fu Jen Catholic University, 2002.

Jemolo, Arturo Carlo. *Lezioni di diritto ecclesiastico*, Milano, Giuffrè, 1979.

Jiao, Wu. "Patriotism and religion can go hand in hand", *Xinhua News Agency*, 6 September 2007, [www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2007-09/06/content\\_6084657.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2007-09/06/content_6084657.htm). Accessed 8 September 2007.

Joffe, Josef. "Rethinking the Nation-State: The Many Meanings of Sovereignty", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 78, No. 6, November/December 1999, pp. 122-127.

John Paul II. "Message for the Fourth Centenary of the Arrival in Beijing of the Great Missionary and Scientist Matteo Ricci", in Institute of Catholic History of Fu Jen Catholic University, *A Collection of Documents on the History of the 60 Years of Sino-Vatican Diplomatic Relations*, Taipei, Fu Jen Catholic University, 2002.

John Paul II. "Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation 'Ecclesia in Asia'", 6 November 1999, [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_exh\\_06111999\\_ecclesia-in-asia\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_06111999_ecclesia-in-asia_en.html). Accessed 16 November 2007.

John XXIII. "Letter to the Hierarchy in Formosa, 29 June 1961", in Elmer Wurth and Betty Ann Maheu, *Papal Documents Related to China (1937-2005)*, Holy Spirit Study Centre, Hong Kong, 2006, pp. 131-135.

Johnson, Tim. "In corners of China, a wounded Catholic Church begins to heal", *Parish World Catholic Magazine*, 20 May 2006, [http://www.parishworld.net/con\\_CatholicNews.cfm?contentUUID=69CDD869-1143-E0A9-5946562E7D42B3BA%7C200605&arcView=May\\_2006](http://www.parishworld.net/con_CatholicNews.cfm?contentUUID=69CDD869-1143-E0A9-5946562E7D42B3BA%7C200605&arcView=May_2006). Accessed 25 March 2007.

Johnston, Douglas. *Faith-Based Diplomacy: Trumping Realpolitik*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2003.

Kindopp, Jason. "Jason Kindopp's Commentary on Religious Freedom", *Religion & Ethics Newsweekly*, 15 February 2002, <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/week524/kindopp.html>. Accessed 8 September 2007.

Kung, Joseph. "Open Letter to the Vatican", 28 March 2000, *Cardinal Kung Foundation*, <http://www.cardinalkungfoundation.org/cpa/openletter.html>. Accessed 3 March 2007.

Kwan, Daniel Y. K. *Marxist Intellectuals and the Chinese Labour Movement: A Study of Deng Zhongxia (1894-1933)*, University of Washington Press, Washington DC, 1997.

Ladany, Lazlo. "Kan Zhongguo dalu tianzhujiaohui" ("A Look at the Catholic Church on the Chinese Mainland"), *Baixing (Common People)*, No. 71, May 1984.

Lai, I-Chung. "Taiwan Examines Its Policies of Diplomacy", *China Brief*, Vol. VI, Issue 20, 4 October 2006, pp. 7-9.

Lajolo, Giovanni. "The Nature and Function of Papal Diplomacy", in Holy See and Republic of Singapore, *25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations between the Republic of Singapore and the Holy See. 1981- 2006*, Singapore, The Apostolic Nunciature in Singapore, 2006, pp. 14-18.

Lazar, Daniel Aaron. "Politics in The People's Republic of China (PRC)", *Daniel Aaron Lazar*, 19 November 2007, <http://www.daniellazar.com/wp-content/uploads/politics-in-china-lecture-2007.doc>. Accessed 3 February 2008.

Lazzarotto, Angelo. "Progress in Religious Freedom in China?", *Tripod*, Vol. 22, No. 124, Spring 2002, [www.hsstudyc.org.hk/trip4-2.htm](http://www.hsstudyc.org.hk/trip4-2.htm). Accessed 16 February 2007.

Leung, Ambrose and Felix Chan. "Taiwanese 'hurt' by Zen's remarks", *South China Morning Post*, 24 March 2006, <http://www.scmp.com/portal/site/SCMP/menuitem.06f0b401397a029733492d9253a0a0a0/?vgnextoid=81e5bd9b07221110VgnVCM100000360a0a0aRCRD&s=Archive>. Accessed 18 April 2007.

Leung, Beatrice. "Sino-Vatican Relations et the Century's Turn", *Journal of Contemporary China*, Vol. 14, No. 43, May 2005, pp. 353-370.

Leung, Beatrice. "Communist Party-Vatican Interplay Over the Training of Church Leaders in China", *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, Vol. 40, Issue 4, December 2001, pp. 657-673.

Leung, Beatrice. "The Sino-Vatican Negotiations: Old Problems in a New Context", *China Quarterly*, No. 153, March 1998, pp. 128-140.

Leung, Beatrice. "Religious Freedom and the Constitution in the People's Republic of China: Interpretation and Implementation", *Diskus*, Vol. 3, No. 1, March 1995, pp. 1-18.

Leung, Beatrice. *Sino-Vatican Relations: Problems in Conflicting Authority, 1976-1986*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Li, Dan J. *China Transition, 1517-1911*, New York, Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1969.

Liu, Henry C. K. "The Abduction of Modernity - Part 3: Rule of Law vs Confucianism", *Asia Times*, 24 July 2003, <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China/EG24Ad01.html>. Accessed 13 September 2007.

Liu, Junning. "The New Trinity: The Political Consequences of the WTO, PNTR and Internet in China", *Perspectives*, Vol. 3, No. 4, March 2002, [http://www.oycf.org/perspectives/16\\_033102/new\\_trinity.htm](http://www.oycf.org/perspectives/16_033102/new_trinity.htm). Accessed 15 September 2007.



Liu, Paul. "Preserving ties with the Vatican", *Taipei Times*, 31 October 2001, p. 8.

Loewenstein, Beckie. "Continuity the Theme of the 17th Party Congress", *US-China Today*, 09 November 2007,

<http://uschina.usc.edu/ShowFeature.aspx?articleID=889>. Accessed 14 November 2007.

Lu, Myra. "Holy See urged to respect ties", *Taiwan Journal*, 26 March 1999,

<http://taiwanjournal.nat.gov.tw/site/Tj/ct.asp?xItem=17034&CtNode=122>.

Accessed 17 January 2007.

Lynch, John E. "Appointments of Bishops, History" in Philippe Levillain, *The Papacy: An Encyclopedia*, New York, Routledge, 2001, Vol. 1, pp. 90-94.

Madsen, Richard. "The Chinese Catholic Church as Part of Civil Society", *U.S. Catholic China Bureau Resources*, 17 September 2004,

<http://www.cecc.gov/pages/roundtables/091704/madsen.php?PHPSESSID=a6fcdc1627ac5864bd77e8ba4c8d72c8>. Accessed 10 April 2007.

Madsen, Richard. "Catholic Revival during the Reform Era", in Daniel L.

Overmyer, *Religion in China Today*, Cambridge (UK), New York and Melbourne, Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 162-181.

Magee, John. "A Man for All Seasons", *Diocese of Cloyne Bulletin*, 16 October 2003, [www.cloynediocese.ie/John%20Paul%20II.htm](http://www.cloynediocese.ie/John%20Paul%20II.htm). Accessed 14 May 2007.

Magister, Sandro. "Dalla nunziatura di Taiwan se ne va l'ultimo. Ma non spegne la luce", *Settimo Cielo*, 8 May 2008,

<http://magister.blogautore.espresso.repubblica.it/2008/05/08/dalla-nunziatura-di-taiwan-se-ne-va-lultimo-e-spegne-la-luce/>. Accessed 17 May 2008.

Magister, Sandro. "Tarcisio Bertone, the Carry-on Cardinal", *www.chiesa*, 14

March 2008, <http://chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it/articolo/193961?eng=y>. Accessed 15 March 2008.

Magister, Sandro. "The Pope Writes, but the Beijing Authorities Don't Respond", *www.chiesa*, 23 July 2007,

<http://chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it/dettaglio.jsp?id=157081&eng=y>. Accessed 1 August 2007.

Magister, Sandro. "Easter in Vietnam: An Extraordinary Account", *www.chiesa*, 5 April 2007, <http://chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it/articolo/131463?eng=y>. Accessed 5 May 2007.

Magister, Sandro. "Diplomatic Relations with China? Maybe on One Condition", *www.chiesa*, 1 September 2006,

<http://chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it/articolo/81121?eng=y>. Accessed 18 March 2007.

Magister, Sandro. "The Pope Is asking China for Freedom, Not Forgiveness", *www.chiesa*, 8 May 2006,

<http://chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it/dettaglio.jsp?id=54442&eng=y>. Accessed 13 March 2007.

Magister, Sandro. "The Vatican's New Policy on China Has a Colour: Cardinal Red", *www.chiesa*, 28 March 2006,  
<http://chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it/dettaglio.jsp?id=47284&eng=y>. Accessed 10 March 2007.

Magister, Sandro. "Between Venus and Mars, the Church of Rome Chooses Both", *www.chiesa*, 12 December 2005,  
<http://chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it/articolo/43322?&eng=y>. Accessed 15 February 2007.

Magister, Sandro. "Rome Is Calling Beijing - But the Connection Keeps Getting Interrupted", *www.chiesa*, 27 October 2005,  
<http://chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it/articolo/41210?&eng=y>. Accessed 7 March 2007.

Magister, Sandro. "China: A Cardinal's Flattery Doesn't Set Any Bishops Free", *www.chiesa*, 21 March 2005,  
<http://chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it/articolo/25526&eng=y>. Accessed 4 August 2007.

Magister, Sandro. "Vatican Rumors: The Rise of the Red Pope", *www.chiesa*, 25 June 2004, <http://chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it/articolo/7049?eng=y>. Accessed 3 August 2007.

Magister, Sandro. "Lo strano ritiro spirituale di Jiang Zemin e compagni", *www.chiesa*, 15 January 2002, <http://chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it/articolo/7535>. Accessed 17 January 2007.

Maheu, Betty Ann. "The Catholic Church in China", *America Press News*, Vol. 193, No. 14, 7 November 2005, pp. 8-14.

Mallesons Stephen Jaques. "A lesson in Chinese proverbs - some myths exposed", 11 May 2007, pp. 1-20.

Manuel, Paul Christopher. *The Catholic Church and the Nation-State: Comparative Perspectives*, Washington D.C., Georgetown University Press, 2006.

Marshall, Gordon. *Dictionary of Sociology*, London, Oxford University Press, 1998.

Meichtry, Stacy. "The Pope's Prognosticator", *Foreign Policy*, Vol. 85, No. 1, January/February 2006, pp. 86-87.

Mendl, Michael. "The 'Dream' of the two Columns", *Bosconet*, <http://www.bosconet.aust.com/2columns.html>. Accessed 16 February 2007.

Meyer, Robert Sterling. *The Social Justice Mission of the Church: Thinking Globally. Acting Locally*, South Orange (USA), Seton Hall University, 2003.

Mickens, Robert. "Putin Visits Vatican but Does Not Invite Pope Benedict XVI to Russia", *Tablet*, 17 March 2007, [home.catholicweb.com/therussianapostolateofprayer/index.cfm](http://home.catholicweb.com/therussianapostolateofprayer/index.cfm). Accessed 3 January 2008.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China. "Foreign Ministry Spokesman Qui Gang's Regular Press Conference on 5 July 2007", <http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/fyrth/t337529.htm>. Accessed 19 July 2007.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China. "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Qui Gang's remarks on the Pope's letter to Chinese Catholics on 30 June 2007", <http://www.chineseembassy.org/eng/xwfw/s2510/t335525.htm>. Accessed 3 July 2007.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China. "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Qui Gang's Regular Press Conference on 19 June 2007", <http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/fyrth/t331911.htm>. Accessed 2 June 2007.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China. "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Liu Jianchao's Regular Press Conference on 23 January 2007", <http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/fyrth/t291388.htm>. Accessed 24 January 2007.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China. "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Liu Jianchao's Regular Press Conference on 9 May 2006", <http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/fyrth/t291388.htm>. Accessed 24 January 2007.

Mir, Mark Stephen, "The Mechanics of Heaven: Jesuit Astronomers at the Qing Court", *Ricci Institute for Chinese-Western Cultural History*,  
[http://www.usfca.edu/ricci/exhibits/dragon\\_skies/index.htm](http://www.usfca.edu/ricci/exhibits/dragon_skies/index.htm). Accessed 4 March 2007.

Miranda, Salvador. *The Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, Biographical Dictionary (1903-2005)*, Miami, Florida International University, 2006,  
<http://www.fiu.edu/~mirandas/bios-c.htm>. Accessed 3 March 2007.

Moreau, Theresa Marie. "Searching for Bishop Su. Persecuted Chinese bishop gone but not forgotten", *Remnant*, 26 July 2006, [www.RemnantNewspaper.com](http://www.RemnantNewspaper.com). Accessed 2 August 2007.

Most, William G. "The Magisterium of Teaching Authority of the Church", *EWTN*, March 2005,  
<http://www.ewtn.com/faith/Teachings/chura4.htm>. Accessed 17 January 2008.

Mulvenon, James. "The PLA and the 'Three Represents': Jiang's Bodyguards or Party-Army?", *China Leadership Monitor*, No. 4, Fall 2002, pp. 1-11.

Murphy, David. "Mass Appeal", *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 27 December 2001, [http://www.feer.com/articles/2001/0112\\_27/p032china.html](http://www.feer.com/articles/2001/0112_27/p032china.html). Accessed 6 September 2007.

Murphy, David. "In communion", *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 4 October 2001, [http://www.feer.com/breaking\\_news/010926.html](http://www.feer.com/breaking_news/010926.html). Accessed 12 August 2007.

Murray, John Courtney. *From Religious Liberty: Catholic Struggles with Pluralism*, Louisville (USA), Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993.

Myers, James T. *Enemies Without Guns: The Catholic Church in China*, New York, Paragon House, 1991.

Nagorski, Andrew. "The Power of Pope John Paul II", *Notre Dame Magazine*, Winter 2002 - 03, pp. 1-2.

*National Catholic Reporter*. "Vietnam to return nunciature", 22 February 2008, [http://ncronline.org/NCR\\_Online/archives2/2008a/022208/022208c.htm](http://ncronline.org/NCR_Online/archives2/2008a/022208/022208c.htm). Accessed 10 March 2008.

Neill, Simon. *A History of Christian Missions*, Harmondsworth (UK), Penguin Books, 1964.

Nish, Ian. *Japanese Foreign Policy in the Interwar Period*, Westport (Connecticut), Greenwood Publishing Group, 2002.

Norris, Pippa and Ronald Inglehart. *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide*, Cambridge (UK), Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Nye, Joseph. "Europe's Soft Power", *Globalist*, 3 May 2004, <http://www.theglobalist.com/StoryId.aspx?StoryId=3886>. Accessed 17 September 2007.

Nye, Joseph. "Propaganda Isn't the Way: Soft Power", *International Herald Tribune*, 10 January 2003,

[http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/news/opeds/2003/nye\\_soft\\_power\\_iht\\_011003.htm](http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/news/opeds/2003/nye_soft_power_iht_011003.htm).

Accessed 8 June 2007.

Nye, Joseph. "Podium: Joseph Nye: To win the war on terror, you need the carrot", *Independent*, 13 June 2005,

[http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_qn4158/is\\_20050613/ai\\_n14664193](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qn4158/is_20050613/ai_n14664193). Accessed 1 September 2007.

Oakeshott, Michael J. *The Social and Political Doctrines of Contemporary Europe*, Cambridge (UK), Cambridge University Press, 1939.

O'Brien, George D. *Hegel on Reason and History*, Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1975.

O'Connell, Gerard. "Commission For China Reaffirms Holy See Wants 'Respectful And Constructive Dialogue'", *UCA News*, 14 March 2008,

[http://www.catholic.org/international/international\\_story.php?id=24317](http://www.catholic.org/international/international_story.php?id=24317). Accessed 18 March 2008.

O'Connell, Gerard. "China, Intellectual Apostolate Rank Among Top Jesuit Priorities", *UCA News*, 12 March 2008,

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/USCCBnews/message/2069>. Accessed 24 March 2008.



O'Connell, Gerard. "Key Vatican appointment signals that Benedict's chosen team fully in place", *UCA News*, 11 June 2007,

[http://www.catholic.org/international/international\\_story.php?id=24348](http://www.catholic.org/international/international_story.php?id=24348). Accessed 12 August 2007.

Olesen, Alexa. "China's Church Defies Vatican Objections", *Associate Press*, 30 April 2006,

[http://missionxp.webblogg.se/300406202907\\_chinas\\_church\\_defies\\_vatican\\_obj.html](http://missionxp.webblogg.se/300406202907_chinas_church_defies_vatican_obj.html). Accessed 20 March 2007.

Oppenheimer, Franz. *The State*, New York, Free Life Editions, 1975.

Owen, Richard. "Cardinal Zen 'tones down' criticism to avoid rift between Rome and Beijing", *Times*, 21 March 2008,

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/faith/article3594280.ece>. Accessed 1 April 2008.

Pan, Philip. "Up From the Underground", *Washington Post*, 29 April 2005,

[http://www.washingtonpost.com/wpdyn/content/article/2005/04/28/AR2005042801665\\_pf.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wpdyn/content/article/2005/04/28/AR2005042801665_pf.html). Accessed 20 March 2007.

Parolin, Pietro. "A Church full of life. In a Communist country", *30Days*, February 2007, <http://www.30giorni.it/us/articolo.asp?id=13525>. Accessed 21 October 2007.

Parris, Kristen. "Elite Transformation and Institutional Change: The Recent Party Congresses in China", *Daniel Aaron Lazar*, 8 September 2007, <http://www.daniellazar.com/wp-content/uploads/elite-transformation-and-institutional-change.doc>. Accessed 3 February 2008.

Paul VI, "Message to the Chinese Leaders", in Institute of Catholic History of Fu Jen Catholic University, *A Collection of Documents on the History of the 60 Years of Sino-Vatican Diplomatic Relations*, Taipei, Fu Jen Catholic University, 2002, p. 92.

*PBS - Religion & Ethics Newsweekly*. "Pope Benedict's Foreign Policy", 11 April 2008, Episode 1132, <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/week1132/cover.html>. Accessed 14 April 2008.

*PBS - Religion & Ethics Newsweekly*. "Interview to J. Peter Pham", Episode 1132, 11 April 2008, <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/week1132/pham.html>. Accessed 14 April 2008.

Peduto, Giovanni. "La testimonianza di mons. Pietro Parolin sulla recente visita di una delegazione vaticana in Việt Nam", *Vatican Radio*, 17 March 2007, [http://www.radiovaticana.org/radiogiornale/ore14/2007/marzo/07\\_03\\_17.htm#vietnam](http://www.radiovaticana.org/radiogiornale/ore14/2007/marzo/07_03_17.htm#vietnam). Accessed 19 June 2007.

Pei, Minxin. "China's Precarious Balance: Political and Social Cohesiveness and Stability in a Fast-Changing Society", in Institute for National Strategic Studies, *Asian Perspectives on the Challenges of China*, Washington D.C., National Defense University Press, 2001, pp. 49-56.

*People's Daily*. "China, Vatican in contact for restoring ties", 3 April 2006, [http://english.people.com.cn/200604/03/eng20060403\\_255465.html](http://english.people.com.cn/200604/03/eng20060403_255465.html). Accessed 14 March 2007.

*People's Daily*. "The Communist Party of China (CPC)", 2001, <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/data/organs/cpc.html>.

*People's Daily*. "China's State Administration of Religious Affairs Spokesman on Vatican's 'Canonisation of Saints'", 2 October 2000, [http://english.people.com.cn/english/200010/01/eng20001001\\_51692.html](http://english.people.com.cn/english/200010/01/eng20001001_51692.html). Accessed 18 March 2007.

*People's Daily*. "Chinese Bishop Criticized Vatican Canonisation in National Day Celebration", 1 October 2000, [http://english.people.com.cn/english/200010/01/eng20001001\\_51688.html](http://english.people.com.cn/english/200010/01/eng20001001_51688.html). Accessed 21 March 2007.

*People's Daily*. "Chinese Catholics Denounce Vatican's Planned Canonisation of 'Saint'", 26 September 2000, [http://english.people.com.cn/english/200009/26/eng20000926\\_51319.html](http://english.people.com.cn/english/200009/26/eng20000926_51319.html). Accessed 15 March 2007.

People's Republic of China. *Criminal Law of the People's Republic of China*, 14 March 1997, <http://www.colaw.cn/findlaw/crime/criminallaw1.html>. 7 September 2007.

People's Republic of China. *Constitution of the People's Republic of China*, 4 December 1982, <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/constitution/constitution.html>. Accessed 9 April 2007.

Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations. "A Short History of the Holy See's Diplomacy", [http://www.holyseemission.org/short\\_history.html](http://www.holyseemission.org/short_history.html). Accessed 1 March 2007.

Peterson, Garry. "Systems Basics", *McGill University - Department of Geography*, 22 November 2004, <http://www.geog.mcgill.ca/faculty/peterson/susfut/resilience/systems/systemBasics.html>. Accessed 14 February 2008.

Pius XI, "encyclical letter *Non Abbiamo Bisogno*", 29 June 1931, [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/pius\\_xi/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-xi\\_enc\\_29061931\\_non-abbiamo-bisogno\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_29061931_non-abbiamo-bisogno_en.html). Accessed 17 September 2007.

Pius XII, "encyclical letter *Ad Sinarum Gentes*", 7 October 1954, in Institute of Catholic History of Fu Jen Catholic University, *A Collection of Documents on the History of the 60 Years of Sino-Vatican Diplomatic Relations*, Taipei, Fu Jen Catholic University, 2002, pp. 11-22.

Pius XII, “encyclical letter *Ad Apostolorum Principis*, 23 March 1958”, in Elmer Wurth and Betty Ann Maheu, *Papal Documents Related to China (1937-2005)*, Holy Spirit Study Centre, Hong Kong, 2006, pp. 77-86.

Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 2 April 2004,

[http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/justpeace/documents/rc\\_pc\\_justpeace\\_doc\\_20060526\\_compendio-dott-soc\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20060526_compendio-dott-soc_en.html). Accessed 7 March 2007.

Pontificia Accademia Ecclesiastica. “Cenni Storici 1701-2001”, 2001,

[http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_academies/acdeccles/documents/storia\\_it.htm](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_academies/acdeccles/documents/storia_it.htm). Accessed 20 February 2007.

Portero, Fiorentino. “El debite estratégico estaduonidense en el ocaso de la presidencia de George W. Bush”, *Grupo de Estudios Estratégicos GEES*, 10 July 2006, pp. 1-8.

Potter, Pitman B. “Belief in Control: Regulation of Religion in China”, *China Quarterly*, No. 174, July 2003, pp. 317-337.

*Press Center of the 17<sup>th</sup> CPC National Congress*. “Flag and emblem of Communist Party of China”, 7 October 2007, <http://english.cpcnews.cn/92277/6277917.html>. Accessed 15 February 2008.

Puet, Tim. "Vatican diplomat expresses hope for normalizing relations with China", *Catholic News Service*, 13 March 2007,

<http://www.catholicnews.com/data/stories/cns/0701419.htm>. Accessed 28 March 2007.

Pullella, Philip. "Vatican list conditions for ties with China", *Reuters*, 25 October 2005,

[http://www.redorbit.com/news/international/284211/vatican\\_lists\\_conditions\\_for\\_ties\\_with\\_china/index.html](http://www.redorbit.com/news/international/284211/vatican_lists_conditions_for_ties_with_china/index.html). Accessed 20 February 2007.

Punzi, Federico. "Olimpiadi, la Cina è nervosa", *Opinione*, 11 April 2008,

[http://www.opinione.it/pages.php?dir=naz&act=art&edi=71&id\\_art=2926&aa=2008](http://www.opinione.it/pages.php?dir=naz&act=art&edi=71&id_art=2926&aa=2008). Accessed 11 April 2008.

Raha, Shuma. "The house that Mother built", *Telegraph*, 2 September 2007,

[http://www.telegraphindia.com/1070902/asp/7days/story\\_8265270.asp](http://www.telegraphindia.com/1070902/asp/7days/story_8265270.asp). Accessed 20 December 2007.

*Radio Free Europe*. "Putin Visits Vatican As Catholic-Orthodox Ties Warm", 13 March 2007, <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2007/03/f5628350-f794-4897-a847-bedfe788ab69.html?napage=2>. Accessed 22 December 2007.

Raman, Bahukutumbi. "Anti-Christian Violence in Parts of India", *Sapra India Foundation*, 31 January 1999,

[http://www.subcontinent.com/sapra/research/internal/n\\_1999\\_01\\_31.html](http://www.subcontinent.com/sapra/research/internal/n_1999_01_31.html). Accessed 16 September 2007.

Ramet, Pedro. *Religion and Nationalism in Soviet and East European Politics*, Durham and London, Duke University Press, 1989.

Redziochh, Wlodzimierz. "What future of the Church in China?", *Niedziela*, No. 32, 2007,

[http://sunday.niedziela.pl/artykul.php?nr=200409&dz=swiat&id\\_art=00090](http://sunday.niedziela.pl/artykul.php?nr=200409&dz=swiat&id_art=00090).

Accessed 13 December 2007.

Reese, Thomas J. *Inside the Vatican: The Politics and Organization of the Catholic Church*, Cambridge (Massachusetts), Harvard University Press, 1998.

Ricciardi, Giovanni, "Un Francescano alla Corte del Gran Khan", *30Days*, October 2003,

<http://www.30giorni.it/it/articolo.asp?id=1695>. Accessed 15 February 2007.

Rice, Condoleeza. "Promoting the National Interest", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 79, No. 1, January-February 2000, pp. 45-62.

Riding, Alan. "Pope and Gorbachev to Meet", *New York Times*, 11 September 1989,

<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=950DE4DB1E3CF932A2575AC0A96F948260>. Accessed 13 December 2007.

Rodari, Paolo. "La Realpolitik del Papa verso la Cina passa dalla Via Crucis al Colosseo", *Riformista*, 6 March 2008,  
<http://www.palazzoapostolico.it/dblog/articolo.asp?articolo=310>. Accessed 10 March 2008.

Rodari, Paolo. "Conversazione con monsignor Ravasi: la cultura secondo Ratzinger", *Riformista*, 31 gennaio 2008,  
[www.palazzoapostolico.it/dblog/stampa.asp?articolo=285](http://www.palazzoapostolico.it/dblog/stampa.asp?articolo=285). Accessed 5 February 2008.

Rodelli, Luigi and Berruti Mario. *Patti Lateranensi e piccola antologia della legislazione italiana*, Varese (Italy), Dall'Oglio, 1968.

*Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Los Angeles - Archdiocesan News Archive*.  
"Minutes From The San Fernando Regional Council Meeting of September 16, 2006", 9 October 2006,  
<http://www.archdiocese.la/news/story.php?newsid=812>. Accessed 3 April 2007.

Roy, Denny. "China's Pitch for a Multipolar World: The New Security Concept", *Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 1, May 2003, pp. 1-4.

Rulli, Giovanni. "La Santa Sede e il problema della pace", *La Civiltà Cattolica*, Vol. 1, No. 2990, 15 January 1975, pp. 189-199.

Sala, Ilaria Maria. *Il Dio dell'Asia. Religione e politica in Oriente. Un reportage*, Milano, Il Saggiatore, 2006.



Satter, David. "Why Gorbachev Lost - Failure of Mikhail Gorbachev's economic policies before the Soviet coup d'etat", *National Review*, 23 september 1991, [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m1282/is\\_/ai\\_11333948](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1282/is_/ai_11333948). Accessed 16 December 2007.

Scarafoni, Paolo. *The Ethical State (According to Hegel's Philosophy)*, videoconference, Congregation for the Clergy, Rome, 29 October 2004.

Schmid, Raphaela. "Zen in Venice: An Interview", *First Things*, 30 July 2007, <http://www.firstthings.com/onthesquare/?p=809>. Accessed 6 August 2007.

Second Vatican Council. *Decree Concerning the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church 'Christus Dominus'*, 28 October 1965.

Secretariat of Chinese Communist Party Central, "Regarding the Strengthening of Catholic Church Work in the New Circumstances", *Tripod*, Vol. 20, No. 116, Autumn 2000, pp. 32-36.

Sheridan, Michael. "Vatican fights to save bishop held by China", *Sunday Times*, 18 June 2006, <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/article675941.ece>. Accessed 22 March 2007.

*Signis*. "Archbishop Celli Named New President of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications", 27 June 2007, [http://www.signis.net/article.php3?id\\_article=1481](http://www.signis.net/article.php3?id_article=1481). Accessed 3 July 2007.

Signorelli, Peter. "Toward a Beijing-Vatican Rapprochement", *Wanniski*, 28

December 2000,

<http://www.wanniski.com/showarticle.asp?articleid=4277>. Accessed 30 December 2007.

Sisci, Francesco and Francesco Strazzari. *Santa Sede - Cina: l'incomprensione antica, l'interrogativo presente*, Bologna, Centro Editoriale Dehoniano, 2008.

Sisci, Francesco. "China, Catholic Church at a crossroads", *Asia Times*, 12 April 2005,

<http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China/GD12Ad05.html>. Accessed 20 March 2007.

Socialist Republic of Vietnam, *Ordinance on Beliefs and Religions*, 29 June 2004,

[http://vbqpl3.moj.gov.vn/law/en/2001\\_to\\_2010/2004/200406/200406180007\\_en/awdocument\\_view](http://vbqpl3.moj.gov.vn/law/en/2001_to_2010/2004/200406/200406180007_en/awdocument_view). Accessed 3 January 2008.

Spencer, Richard. "Vatican ready to sacrifice Taiwan for China", *Telegraph*, 16 May 2005,

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2005/05/16/wvati16.xml&sSheet=/portal/2005/05/16/ixportal.html>. Accessed. 12 September 2007.

*Spero News*. "Benedict and his love letter to the Chinese", 30 June 2007,

<http://www.speroforum.com/site/article.asp?idarticle=10143&t=Benedict+and+his+love+letter+to+the+Chinese>. Accessed 5 July 2007.

*Spero News*. "China to Pope: Kow tow", 26 July 2007,

<http://www.speroforum.com/site/article.asp?idarticle=10448&t=China+to+Pope%3A+Kow+tow>. Accessed 27 July 2007.

*Spero News*. "Vatican delegation goes to Beijing", 27 June 2006,

[www.speroforum.com/site/article.asp?idCategory=33&idsub=122&id=4207](http://www.speroforum.com/site/article.asp?idCategory=33&idsub=122&id=4207).

Accessed 22 March 2007.

Spiegel, Mickey. "China: State Control of Religion", *Human Rights Watch*, October 1997,

[http://www.hrw.org/reports/1997/china1/#P247\\_26119](http://www.hrw.org/reports/1997/china1/#P247_26119). Accessed 11 September 2007.

State Administration for Religious Affairs of the People's Republic of China.

*Freedom of Religious Belief*, 16 October 1997,

<http://www.sara.gov.cn/GB//zgzt/index.html>. Accessed 19 February 2007.

Stato della Città del Vaticano. "Portale istituzionale", 2007-2008,

<http://www.vaticanstate.va/IT/homepage.htm>. Accessed 10 February 2008.

*Sunday Examiner*. "The Pope Speaks to Chinese Christians", 27 February 1981,

[sundayex.catholic.org.hk](http://sundayex.catholic.org.hk). Accessed 1 March 2007.

*SVD News*. "Archbishop Claudio Maria Celli, secretary of the Administration of the Patrimony of the Holy See was awarded the Freinademetz Prize for 2005 for his efforts to improve Vatican - China relations", 25 September 2005, <http://www.svdireland.com/news/022005.htm>. Accessed 14 October 2007.

Svizzero (Lo). "La 'ostpolitik' di Ratzinger verso Mosca e Pechino. Doppio scacco matto", *Opinione*, 29 September 2007, [www.opinione.it/pages.php?dir=naz&act=art&edi=209&id\\_art=6396](http://www.opinione.it/pages.php?dir=naz&act=art&edi=209&id_art=6396). Accessed 29 September 2007.

Tai, Raymond, "The Vatican Dilemma: Taipei and/or Beijing?", public lecture, International Institute of Asian Studies and the Sinological Institute of Leiden University, Leiden (The Netherlands), 25 April 2002, *International Institute for Asian Studies Newsletter*, No. 28, August 2002, pp. 1-8.

*Taipei Times*. "Vatican envoy vows support", 23 November 2005, p. 3.

Tauran, Jean-Louis. *Is the Holy See a Political Power?*, magisterial lecture, Provident University, Taichung (Taiwan) 23 November 2005.

Tauran, Jean-Louis. "Magisterial Lecture on the Theme 'The Presence of the Holy See in The International Organization'", magisterial lecture, Catholic University of the Sacred Heart, Milan (Italy), 22 April 2002, <http://www.ewtn.com/library/CURIA/STATINT.HTM>. Accessed 21 February 2007.

Thornton, John L. "China's Leadership Gap", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 85, No. 6, November/December 2006, pp. 133-140.

Thussu, Daya Kishan. *News as Entertainment: the Rise of Global Infotainment*, London, Sage Publications, 2007.

*Time*. "Kowtow, 1816", 17 April 1950,  
<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,805374-1,00.html>. Accessed 5 February 2008.

Tkacik, John J., Fewsmith Jr., Joseph and Maryanne Kivlehan. "Who's Hu? Assessing China's Heir Apparent, Hu Jintao", *Heritage Foundation*, 19 April 2002,  
<http://www.heritage.org/Research/AsiaandthePacific/HL739.cfm>. Accessed 2 November 2007.

Tosatti, Marco. "By Small Steps", *30Days*, January/February 2006,  
<http://www.30giorni.it/us/articolo.asp?id=10118>. Accessed 31 March 2007.

*UCA News*. "Cardinal Zen Points Out Errors in Chinese Translations", 3 July 2007,  
<http://www.ucanews.com>. Accessed 9 July 2007.

*UCA News*. "'Open' bishops instructed to keep calm no matter what papal letter on China says", 29 July 2007,  
[http://www.catholic.org/international/international\\_story.php?id=24567](http://www.catholic.org/international/international_story.php?id=24567). Accessed 1 August 2008.

*U.S.-China Policy Foundation Bulletin*. “Dr. William Johnson’s Policymakers Seminar Series Lecture”, 6 May 2005, <http://www.uscpf.org/html/events/2005/drjohnsonlecture.html>. Accessed 23 April 2007.

U.S. Department of State. “Vietnam - Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - 2007”. 11 March 2008, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/100543.htm>, . Accessed 17 March 2008.

U.S. Department of State. “Background Note: Holy See”, January 2008, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3819.htm>. Accessed 5 February 2008.

U.S. Department of State. “Vietnam - Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - 2006”, 6 March 2007, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/78796.htm>. Accessed 27 October 2007.

U.S. Department of State. “Deputy Secretary Zoellick Statement on Conclusion of the Second U.S.-China Senior Dialogue”, 8 December 2005, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2005/57822.htm>. Accessed 18 November 2007.

U.S. Department of State, “Vietnam - Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - 1998”, 26 February 1999, <http://www.vietquoc.com/hum-rite.htm>. Accessed 27 October 2007.

Valente, Gianni. “For a calm and tranquil life”, *30Days*, July 2007, <http://www.30giorni.it/us/articolo.asp?id=15042>. Accessed 28 July 2007.

Valente, Gianni. "Praise of Flexibility", *30Days*, May 2007,  
<http://www.30giorni.it/us/articolo.asp?id=14517>. Accessed 13 June 2007.

Valente, Gianni. "The long road and 'accidents along the way'", *30Days*, January 2007,  
[http://www.30giorni.it/us/articolo\\_stamp.a.asp?id=12905](http://www.30giorni.it/us/articolo_stamp.a.asp?id=12905). Accessed 20 February 2007.

Valente, Gianni. "Vatican-Manchukuo, Mea Culpas are not Necessary", *30Days*, October 2005,  
<http://www.30giorni.it/us/articolo.asp?id=9611>. Accessed 13 January 2007.

Valente, Gianni. "Elected 'democratically'. Valid nevertheless", *30Days*, October 2005, <http://www.30giorni.it/us/articolo.asp?id=3832>. Accessed 3 March 2008.

Valente, Gianni. "Iraq for the Iraqis. Interview with Archbishop Fernando Filoni", *30Days*, April 2004, <http://www.30giorni.it/us/articolo.asp?id=3652>. Accessed 25 May 2007.

*Vatican Radio*. "L'arcivescovo Lajolo sulle relazioni diplomatiche tra Santa Sede e Russia e sul 'piccolo gregge' cattolico russo", 26 October 2005,  
<http://www.radiovaticana.org/orc/Articolo.asp?id=53557>. Accessed 17 May 2007.

Vatican Secret Archives. "The Papal Delegations",  
<http://asv.vatican.va/en/arch/delegations.htm>. Accessed 15 February 2008.

Vermander, Benoît. "C'è un risveglio religioso in Cina?", *La Civiltà Cattolica*, Vol. 1, No. 3689, 6 March 2004, pp. 500-509.

Vietnam Ministry of Foreign Affairs. "PM Dung meets Pope, Vatican PM", 26 January 2007,  
<http://www.mofa.gov.vn/en/nr040807104143/nr040807105001/ns070126100821>.  
Accessed 9 March 2007.

Waldenfels, Hans. "La Cina sta aprendo: Impressioni di un viaggio", *La Civiltà Cattolica*, Vol. 4, No. 3278, 15 October 2005, pp. 186-196.

Wallerstein, Immanuel. "Time and Duration: The Unexcluded Middle", *Thesis Eleven*, No. 54, August 1998, <http://www.binghamton.edu/fbc/iwtimdu.htm>.  
Accessed 10 April 2008.

Weber, Max. *Sociology of Rulership and Religion*, online edition by Moriyuki Abukuma, 2003,  
[http://www.ne.jp/asahi/moriyuki/abukuma/weber/society/ruler/ruler\\_rel/rul\\_rel\\_frame.html](http://www.ne.jp/asahi/moriyuki/abukuma/weber/society/ruler/ruler_rel/rul_rel_frame.html). Accessed 13 September 2007.

Weber, Max. *Economy and Society. An Outline of Interpretative Sociology*, edited by Guenther Roth and Claus Mittich, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1978.

Wei Tsing-sing, Louis. "China and Vatican", *China Notes*, Vol. 8, No. 4, Autumn 1970, pp. 48-62.



Weigel, George. "Papacy and Power", *First Things*, February 2001,  
[http://www.firstthings.com/article.php3?id\\_article=2142](http://www.firstthings.com/article.php3?id_article=2142). Accessed 15 September 2007.

Wiest, Jean-Paul. "Costantini, Celso 1876-1958, Roman Catholic Church, Shanghai, China", in Global China Centre, *Biographical Dictionary of Chinese Christianity*, December 2005,  
[http://www.bdcconline.net/bdcc\\_stories/china/shanghai/costantini\\_c.html](http://www.bdcconline.net/bdcc_stories/china/shanghai/costantini_c.html).  
Accessed 12 March 2007.

Wiest, Jean-Paul. "*Understanding the Roman Catholic Church in China*, paper presentation, The French Centre For Research on Contemporary China, Hong Kong (PRC), 20 June 2002, [www.usccb.net/church-updates/UnderstandingRCCinChina.pdf](http://www.usccb.net/church-updates/UnderstandingRCCinChina.pdf). Accessed 2 March 2007.

Williams, Daniel. "Thaw Seen in Vatican-China Relations", *Washington Post Foreign Service*, 16 October 2005, p. A24.

Winfield, Nicole. "Pope tells Chinese Catholics to unite", *Associated Press*, 1 July 2007,  
[http://www2.ljworld.com/news/2007/jul/01/pope\\_tells\\_chinese\\_catholics\\_unite](http://www2.ljworld.com/news/2007/jul/01/pope_tells_chinese_catholics_unite).  
Accessed 3 July 2007.

Winfield-Hayes, Rupert. "China's rural millions left behind", *BBC*, 7 March 2006,  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/4782194.stm>. Accessed 10 October 2007.

Wo-lap Lam, Willy. "Life of Chinese Communist Party", *Korea Times*, 11 October 2007, [http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/opinion/2008/04/160\\_11745.html](http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/opinion/2008/04/160_11745.html). Accessed 3 February 2008.

Wooden, Cindy. "Taiwan's president asks pope to support bid to join United Nations", *Catholic News Service*, 10 January 2008, <http://www.catholicnews.com/data/stories/cns/0800157.htm>. Accessed 12 January 2008.

Wurth, Elmer and Betty Ann Maheu, *Papal Documents Related to China (1937-2005)*, Holy Spirit Study Centre, Hong Kong, 2006.

*Xinhua News Agency*. "Full text of Constitution of Communist Party of China", 25 October 2007, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2007-10/25/content\\_6944738.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2007-10/25/content_6944738.htm). Accessed 25 October 2007.

*Xinhua News Agency*. "Reincarnation of living Buddha need gov't approval", 4 August 2007, [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2007/08/04/content\\_5448242.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2007/08/04/content_5448242.htm). 5 September 2007.

Yan, Shi. "The True Colours of the 'Saints'", *People's Daily*, 3 October 2000, p. 1.

Yang, Benjamin. *Deng: a Political Biography*, London, M.E. Sharpe, 1997.

Yardley, Jim and Keith Bradsher. "In China-Vatican Fight, the Bishops are the Pawns", *New York Times*, 13 March 2006,  
<http://www.iht.com/articles/2006/05/12/news/china.php>. Accessed 14 March 2007.

Yu, Anthony C. *State and Religion in China*, Chicago, Carus Publishing Company, 2005.

Yue, Pan. "On Advancing the Marxist viewpoint on Religion over time", in Roger Etchegaray, *Verso I cristiani in Cina, visti da una rana dal fondo di un pozzo*, Mondadori, Milano, 2005, pp. 80-89.

Yun-ping, Chang. "Top envoy says Vatican ready to relocate embassy", *Taipei Times*, 30 March 2006,  
<http://www.taipetimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2006/03/30/2003299983>.  
Accessed 14 March 2007.

Zagoria, Donald. "An Emerging China in a World of Interdependence: A Report to the Trilateral Commission", book review, *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 1994, Vol. 73, No. 5, <http://www.foreignaffairs.org/19940901fabook8838/yoichi-funabashi-michel-oksenberg-heinrich-weiss/an-emerging-china-in-a-world-of-interdependence-a-report-to-the-trilateral-commission.html>. Accessed 10 November 2007.

Zen Ze-kiun, Joseph. "Don't misread the Pope's letter", *UCA News*, 18 July 2007,  
[http://www.ucanews.com/html/ucan/f\\_currentspecialdetail.asp?ucalang=English&sPath=news\\_report/english/2007/07/w3/fri/CH02968Cg.txt](http://www.ucanews.com/html/ucan/f_currentspecialdetail.asp?ucalang=English&sPath=news_report/english/2007/07/w3/fri/CH02968Cg.txt). Accessed 22 July 2007.

Zen Ze-kiun, Joseph. "Sino-Vatican Relations after Pope's Death", *Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong Documents*, 2005,  
<http://www.catholic.org.hk/document/050410zen-e.html>. Accessed 20 February 2007.

*Zenit*. "Cardinal Zen Updates Pontiff on China", July 23 2007,  
<http://www.zenit.org/article-20200?l=english>. Accessed 24 July 2007.

*Zenit*. "Cardinal Bertone Welcomes Choice of a 'Well-Suited' Person", 19 July 2007, <http://www.zenit.org/article-20171?l=english>. Accessed 24 July 2007.

*Zenit*. "Sottosegretario per i Rapporti con gli Stati: gli ultimi contatti Vaticano-Vietnam", 20 March 2007, <http://www.zenit.org/article-9264?l=italian>. Accessed 22 October 2007.

*Zenit*. "Mgr Joseph Zen Ze-kiun <<créé>> cardinal per Benoit XVI", 22 February 2006,  
[news.catholique.org/7765-chine-mgr-joseph-zen-ze-kiun-cree-cardinal](http://news.catholique.org/7765-chine-mgr-joseph-zen-ze-kiun-cree-cardinal). Accessed 8 March 2007.

*Zenit*. "China Lays Down Terms for Vatican Ties", 21 April 2005,  
[www.zenit.org/english/visualizza.phtml?sid=69705](http://www.zenit.org/english/visualizza.phtml?sid=69705). Accessed 21 March 2007.

*Zenit*. "The Catholic Church in China",  
<http://www.zenit.org/english/asia/stats2.html>. Accessed 27 January 2007.

Zhao, Suisheng. *Chinese Foreign Policy: Pragmatism and Strategic Behaviour*, New York, M. E. Sharpe, 2004.

Zhao, Yanxia. *Father and Son in Confucianism and Christianity. A Comparative Study of Xunzi and Paul*, Brighton (UK), Sussex Academic Press, 2007.

Zhosul, Elena. "Russia and the Holy See: A new aspect in the diplomatic dialogue", *Interfax*, 13 March 2007, <http://02varvara.wordpress.com/2007/11/11/russia-and-the-holy-see-a-new-aspect-in-the-diplomatic-dialogue/>. Accessed 16 December 2007.

Zhou, Jinghao. *Remarking China's Public's Philosophy for the Twenty-First Century*, Westport (Connecticut), Greenwood Publishing Group, 2003.

Zhou, Yun. "Towards the Rule of Law in Contemporary China: An Educational Approach", *Perspectives*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 31 August 2001, [http://www.oycf.org/Perspectives/13\\_083101/rule\\_law\\_china.htm](http://www.oycf.org/Perspectives/13_083101/rule_law_china.htm). Accessed 10 August 2007.